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G. W. F. Gregor

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. PALMERSTONE

TO

HER DAUGHTER.

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LETTERS

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MRS. PALMERSTONE

TO

HER DAUGHTER;

INCULCATING

MORALITY

BY

ENTERTAINING NARRATIVES.

BY MRS. HUNTER,
OF NORWICH.

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MRS. PALMERSTONE'S LETTERS

TO

HER DAUGHTER.

LETTER XI.

CONTAINING

OBADIAH,

AN

ALLEGORICAL TALE.

I AM very much pleased with your last letter, my dear Eliza: the composition is more correct, and your thoughts are better combined and expressed than usual. You will soon attain a style of ease and perspicuity; and as a proof of what I advance, compare the copy of what you last sent me with the theme you wrote only six months since. I am persuaded that you will be sensible of the advantage you have gained over those difficulties which you mention in

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your last letter, as having so much perplexed you. But a young person who can so well point out those difficulties will soon overcome them.

I remember that, when I was of your age, I adopted a method from which I derived considerable improvement. I read with attention one of Mr. Addison's papers in The Spectator: I then closed the book, but carefully kept the subject in my mind, and took it for my next theme; which, when finished, I placed apart, and at my leisure compared it with the composition by which it had been suggested; for I did not attempt to imitate Mr. Addison's style, or to follow his thoughts closely, but simply and in my best manner to express my own on the same moral subject. You will be able to judge of the imperfections of my essays. But I was not discouraged: I preserved my paper; and some weeks after, without referring to it, I wrote a second on the same subject, which together with the former I again compared with my author. I assure you,

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my Eliza, that I rarely missed the pleasure arising from this review; for I found that I had enlarged my ideas, and improved my expressions. One or two of my juvenile exercises fell into my hands the other day, and I still think they would not disgrace me.

The human mind resembles a rich mine. If the possessor should content himself with indolently saying, "I am told that by opening this mine, which is exclusively my own property, I should enrich my estate and reap a harvest of gold; but, as it lies at some distance, as the labour and expense are very considerable, and the produce is uncertain, I prefer poverty and ease, notwithstanding the offered assistance of my zealous friends, and the prospect of success"—would it be presumptuous to conclude that this man was ignorantly blind to his own interest? Would you not be tempted to remind him, that his youth and his strength would fail, that his necessities would infallibly become more urgent, in proportion as

he became by sloth more unprepared to meet them; and that the just punishment of his present idleness and pusillanimity would be future and unavailing repentance, with the desertion of those friends whose prudent counsel he then rejected?

Young people, and would that I were able to confine my observation to the young! act too often on much the same principles as those I have mentioned. They want no more than they possess: a little current coin, brisk animal spirits, and indulgent friends, carry them gaily and contentedly down the smooth and unruffled stream of life. They may acquire, as they have been so repeatedly assured, hidden treasures, and unexplored stores——So much the better. When they have exhausted those at hand, when the treasures of youth and of health, of comeliness and friends, fail——why, then indeed it will be well to seek at any labour, for those resources which are said to be the provision *Nature* has so kindly prepared for them. The time arrives——it presses upon them,

them, and peradventure they recollect that the business ought not to be deferred to the last minute. They now recall to memory some of those indications formerly given to them, of the precise situation of the place, to which they are at last obliged to turn their thoughts and their hopes. They now remember that the zeal and care of the friends of their youth had set up certain landmarks for their use. They recollect that one, the most revered, of those friends had pointed out the spot in which might be found *pure gold;* that another, experienced in wisdom, had marked where the precious ore was mixed with baser metal; that a third had warned them not to be discouraged in such and such spots; for that, although the vein was deep, and inconsiderable at the beginning, it would, in its progress, be amply productive.

Thus, urged by necessity, and allured by hope, does an inheritor of such a mine begin his procrastinated journey towards it: but he finds the former scene of nature changed;

changed; the country through which he passes has lost its picturesque beauties, it is become desolate and barren, and he is enfeebled by indolence, and saddened by the dreary prospect around him.—Perchance he gains a little eminence, and sees from afar the dilapidated memorials of his friend's prudent precautions; his sinking spirits seize the auspicious signals—he presses forward—but to what conviction? The precious deposit is engulfed by a sea of inordinate passions and tumultuous cares, that in their ebbing course exhibit to his view an useless mass of sand, which baffles industry; and he sees himself consigned, for the remainder of his days, to penury and neglect.

There is not, my Eliza, a precept in morals which contains a more important and self-evident truth than that which says, "Ask, and you shall receive." The mind of man says the same, with nearly the same certitude. You have expressed more diffidence in respect to the vision of Mirzah than was necessary. You comprehend perfectly

fectly the subject of it, and the moral which it contains. As the sphere of your reading enlarges, and your understanding matures, you will insensibly acquire a discriminating taste, if you suffer nothing to escape you by yielding to your vivacity. But if the indulgence of curiosity, or the mere amusement of your leisure, is your sole object in reading, I forewarn you that your profit will be proportionably trifling, that you will never arrive at that judgement on which only your mind can be solidly established, nor ever be capable of selection, or imitation of those authors whose genius and corrected imagination place them, in the opinion of the judicious, as the standards of good and elegant writers.

At ten years of age you read fables and sometimes fairy tales to me. It never occurred to you to examine into their design, their probability, or their improbability: the marvellous delighted you, and the moral escaped you: all the advantage you derived from this practice was a great facility in reading

reading aloud, and the habit of seeking amusement in books. A higher order of allegorical composition has lately come before you with other books; and you tell me that the application sometimes escapes you, and that you find the subject obscure: and yet not a day passes in which your own thoughts do not take this mode of expression without premeditation or study. You have heard hitherto nothing of the art of speaking. Your mother is but little better informed; but she understands what schoolmen mean, when, in defining rhetoric, they call it the art of writing and speaking with elegance and dignity. Perhaps, my Eliza, I might not presume too far in saying that some of those who have best known in what manner to reduce this art to certain prescribed rules, have failed in the application of them. But be this as it may, it is undoubted that nature and genius soar beyond them, and can "catch a grace beyond the reach of art."

Let us try what our own unaided efforts will supply us with on this subject...let us endeavour

endeavour to investigate, with this plain guide, *Nature*, the progress of thought and language. The subject has engaged the attention of the learned; it has been productive of information, and of much speculation. We will place our discoveries under the *latter* head, and then refer them to your grandfather, who will very soon winnow the wheat, if there be any, from the chaff.

It is evident that knowledge, like virtue, is progressive: every faculty of that being intended for another world marks his glorious destination; and he who pauses in his progress will not be able to keep his station: we must either advance or recede: it is the order of nature.

Man collectively, like the individual of his species, has been in a state of infancy. A recent example, when compared with the annals of mankind, will suffice for our purpose. The great Alfred, if I be not mistaken, was one of the first of our monarchs who could write his own name: and from one of those discoveries made by our

celebrated circumnavigator, captain Cook, and mentioned in Forster's work*, we may observe that the state of language is a criterion by which we may judge of the intellectual progress of man, and at the same time form some conjecture respecting the curious phænomenon the diversity of language. I allude to the natives of an island which they approached, who appeared to have no articulate sounds, but expressed their wants and wishes by certain feeble and monotonous cries. Let us represent these people to our minds as the infants of our race. Would not captain Cook and his people be, with respect to them, in a similar situation to that in which you would be with respect to an infant of three months old? The only means of communication must be signs and sounds: and these, from the savage's ignorance of social life, would be vague and ambiguous even to each other, and frequently unintelligible to a stranger; for you

* See Cook's Voyages, by Forster, vol. ii. p. 498.

will

will keep in view that these people were, as it appeared, strangers to all the arts of human life, and that even the accommodations of the most savage state were apparently unknown amongst them. Let us suppose that one or more of our countrymen had by chance been left on this desolate shore, and that the person so left was not the least instructed of those from whom he had been separated. Would it not follow that for some time, and that a very considerable one, he would experience much more difficulty in his intercourse with the natives around him, than you would with an infant? The reason is obvious: because the signs and sounds within the stranger's reach would be more complicated than are necessary for the simple wants of the infant. With attention, even you, or a girl much younger than yourself, would soon learn to distinguish, in the infant committed to your care, the cry of pain, of hunger, or of weariness, from that of anger and impatience But the *infant* of nature and the *infant* of local circumstances

are

are widely different. The most untutored savage is a philosopher compared with a child of a few months old: his existence has depended on more than simple perceptions; certain faculties of his mind must have been expanded in the course of self-preservation, and experience and judgement have been employed by him in providing for his daily necessities. These powers are not unfolded in the first stage of human existence. Our exile consequently would for a time find it impossible to understand all the varied signs and ambiguous sounds of a rational and reflecting creature, however repressed and circumscribed the powers of his mind might be, from the limited sources of his knowledge. The poor savage's difficulties with the stranger would be still more manifold; for he would utter sounds and exhibit signs totally incomprehensible to their simple minds. The remedy for these common evils would, in time, be found in the imitative faculty which it has pleased the great author of our being to bestow on man:

man: and as the infant learns of its nurse to speak, so would these ignorant islanders learn to talk with the stranger.

We will now suppose that they have acquired a language, however imperfect, and a more accurate idea of the advantages of articulate sounds. Their instructor quits them. They insensibly recur to their accustomed sounds, the new pronunciation becomes vitiated, they combine sound with words, they add to or they diminish their acquired stock; and in a course of years a language peculiar to this people is established, and which would be unintelligible to their friendly instructor.

Thus arises a diversity of tongues, which are enriched and fashioned by the communications between man and his fellow man. Our islanders have now a language, and to this language they have affixed common and appropriate ideas. Let us return, my Eliza, from this episode to my metaphor of the *mine*. We will suppose that the work of intellectual improvement is now begun,

and

and that it cannot stop; the intervening earth is cleared away, and the vivid ore appears in all directions. The labourers now arrange, select; and method and order regulate them. The fixed rules of the grammarian, it may be supposed, are not yet established; but they vary and multiply their expressions, and imagination embellishes and gives energy to their words, to meet the vigorous idea: but these are still too slow, and inadequate to the thought; it either eludes the progress, or languishes beneath the burthen of common language. They now turn to heaven, to earth, to things animate and inanimate, in order to clothe their thoughts. Comparison follows: "A man is as strong as a lion." "A woman is as industrious as a bee."

The image once received, the allusion becomes significant and easy; and the tedious detail of the man's courage, and the woman's industry, is spared. No sooner does this figure become familiar, than they advance another step . . . Metaphor springs from

from comparison: "The strong man is a lion." "The cunning man a fox." "God is a rock." "Hope, an anchor," &c. The mind with facility assimilates the idea and the image; it only asks for some correspondence and relation, to unite the object to the borrowed figure which represents it.

From the *metaphor* arises the *allegory*, which is a continuation of metaphors applied to some regular design, and supported by action, events, and characters. Fables are of this sort. The cunning man, under the figure of a fox, addresses a flattering discourse to the unsuspecting and credulous cock, in order to deceive him: he succeeds, and the victim, betrayed by his vanity and credulity, falls a prey to his evil designs. In this species of allegory, the moral is sometimes put into the mouth of the actors, at another deduced from it. The beautiful parables of our divine master, that of Nathan to his guilty monarch, exhibit this mode of composition under another useful point of view. Its salutary lessons reach the heart,

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under circumstances which would render the severe and undisguised reproofs of truth ineffectual to the offender, and dangerous to the friendly voice that spoke them.

Thus Allegory is not only the handmaid of Wisdom and Prudence, but also the attendant grace on Instruction; and attiring herself in the fascinating robe of Amusement, she solicits Curiosity to admit the pleasing guest; and in its gratification conveys to the mind a solid and useful good.

You have in your account prevented my observations on Mirzah, and I am sure you will receive great pleasure from the perusal of many allegories with which we have been favoured by our best writers. You will see the different vehicles they use, and with what success they have been employed.—You will find tropes, or *figures,* under many more definitions, in the little work I inclose with this letter. We will endeavour to familiarize ourselves at least with the examples it affords us. You will be surprised that I mean to content myself with

some

some drawn from your unstudied modes of expression; for nature has already, my dear Eliza, made you a tolerable proficient in *rhetorical flights*, by giving you an imagination which needs no spur. "You are as cold as ice." "Mrs. Beaumont is Goodness personified:" and speaking the other day of Mrs. Siddons's exquisite performance of Lady Macbeth, and the impressive manner in which she appealed to the human bosom, you said "The whole house was appalled; a momentary stillness like death succeeded, and was followed by one burst of nature's abhorrence of murder and perfidy." I refer you to the little work I send you for the place which such language holds in composition or discourse. It is now time that you should understand its value and beauty. Thus, for example, "The fields laugh and sing." Does not this trope beautifully express the fruitfulness of the crop, and the cheerfulness of the season? In my opinion, no particular relation in the best chosen and most poetical words could have produced

so

so happy an effect. How many such examples might be drawn from the same sublime writer, and from a volume "beyond all price!"

The subject of this letter has perhaps led me into a fault, which it is peculiarly needful for you to shun. The imagination requires management; and the *false brilliant* in composition, of which your grandfather was speaking the other day to doctor Mansfield, includes in it a redundancy and injudicious use of rhetorical figures. I had however my design, as this letter related to you; and if that be answered, I will bow submissively to the pruning criticism of your excellent preceptor . . . I have added to my letter two little pieces which may amuse you: they were written some years ago, and addressed to a youth of your age. You will do well to read them to your grandfather: his corrections will render them useful. Heaven bless my child!

A. PALMERSTONE.

OBADIAH

OBADIAH was the son of Naphor and Fatima. The condition of his parents was humble, their desires were few: amongst these, the most powerful was their wish to see Obadiah virtuous, and contented in that retreat where they themselves had found an asylum from a world in which they had been betrayed, and from which they here saw as sure a refuge for the innocence of their son as it had proved to their own. The habitation of Naphor was well calculated to answer their purposes of prudence, and the pressing necessities of that hour which had first conducted them to it; for it was almost inaccessible to human footsteps.

It stood at the base of a stupendous chain of rocks, thrown by the hand of nature into a sweeping and bold amphitheatrical form; to the extremities of which seemed linked the source and the mouth of a rapid river, which inclosed the dwelling of Naphor, and gave fertility to the narrow boundary of soil, from which, with labour, he obtained a scanty

a scanty harvest. The indefatigable Naphor supplied this deficiency from the abundant treasures of the stream, which not only furnished his simple board with plenty, but also delicacies which these children of nature estimated only by their usefulness. Naphor had carefully turned to profit a small boat, in which he had once found safety and reached his present shelter. At stated times he repaired to a large town on the opposite side of the river; but which was too remote to be seen, and by much too distant to be feared. He never entered it; but, after exchanging his commodity for necessaries which contributed to the comforts of his beloved Fatima and his child, returned home, without having any other communication than with a man who found his own advantage in his fidelity.

During these stated intervals of absence the active and industrious Obadiah was employed in the cultivation of a little garden, together with a field of rice and other pulse, and which lost nothing of their produce under

under the diligent eye of Obadiah. The rising sun was welcomed by his cheerful voice, and its last parting ray often sunk beneath the horizon unnoticed, till he was summoned to the evening repast. Thus passed the first season of youth with the contented Obadiah; his heart the abode of innocence, and his hours winged by peace. The death of his mother was the first sorrow he knew, and he bewailed her loss with that bitterness which the ingenuous and inexperienced heart feels under the unlooked-for and unsuspected trials of its strength. The resigned and pious Naphor, better prepared, bowed in meek submission to a stroke that threatened to annihilate the remaining comforts of his life: with a firm confidence he sought consolation in hopes which conducted him beyond the grave of his lamented Fatima, and the prospect of a reunion softened the pangs of separation. He tenderly strove to console the afflicted Obadiah, but failed in his efforts; and with regret he beheld him daily a prey to dejection

tion and unavailing grief. But, alas! he knew not that the sorrow of his son had for its source a cause far removed from the one he strove to mitigate, whilst it endeared him to his heart.

Discontent brooded in the mind of Obadiah: he passed his days in repining, and his repose was broken and restless. To evade his father's pious exhortations he passed hours by his mother's grave, regarding his accustomed occupations with disgust, and his usual labour as insupportable toil. "What!" said he fretfully, "always this stubborn soil! always these rugged and desolate paths! Does life afford nothing to the miserable Obadiah, but the harassing concern of providing a scanty sustenance for an existence that he neither solicited nor enjoys? Is there nothing in this world for the children of mortality but labour and a grave? Surely I am the victim of an usurped authority! the passive slave of timidity, and of the cold caution of one who, having outlived enjoyment himself, believes that I have

have no right to the pleasures or the pursuits of youth!"

Obadiah at length importuned his father to give up to him the charge of conducting the boat. He had hitherto gratefully acknowledged the goodness and wisdom which had spared him the fatigue and peril of the untried navigation: but now, neither the obedience nor the affection of a child was ready to meet the gentle though firm denial of Naphor. Obadiah murmured ... he expostulated ... and finished by sullen silence. The good father saw the pertinacity of his son with sorrow.

"Thou knowest not," said he to him with mildness, "the nature of that boon which thou hast demanded so urgently, nor that the regret which has followed my refusal tends to ingratitude. The voyage that thou so fondly covetest is intricate and dangerous. Thou knowest not the course into which thy fragile bark may be forced, amidst tremendous billows and a boisterous element; no pilot hath hitherto been found, who with unerring

ring judgement hath been able to mark the devious way. The most skilful navigator, and the stoutest vessel, share in the common peril; and few, indeed, are the number who reach the destined haven without loss and trouble; whilst the victims of its fury, and the dupes of its treachery, are innumerable. I have, in my acquired knowledge of this adventurous course, paid a price which thou art unable to estimate; and, experienced as I am, I dare not trust to my own wisdom or prudence. I know that my vigilance is in constant danger of being surprised; and that my wisdom is folly, unaided by our great prophet. Be not, therefore, proud of thy strength and vigour; trust not to thy courage and address. Alas! my son, in the voyage upon which thou so ardently desirest to venture, these advantages resemble the glossy surface of the untroubled waters, and, like them, smile but to betray.

"Be thankful for thy present security. Allah, in his own time, will call upon thee for thy destined duties; at present it is His merciful

merciful will that thou remain *here*, in peace." The boat was ready, and Naphor departed.

Obadiah, troubled but not convinced, now listlessly turned his reluctant steps to the little garden, which languished for its master's wonted care. Discontented and displeased, he found the invigorating beams of the morning sun oppressive, and with fretful impatience threw himself under the shade of a spreading palm-tree, and covered his face with his robe.

A deep sleep pervaded his senses; and left the outstretched and passive Obadiah no other evidences of existence than those which fancy fabricated from the materials which she found in his disturbed mind.... He thought that he had availed himself of his father's absence to effect his escape from the cottage, by climbing the rocks which surrounded it. In his waking reveries Obadiah had frequently meditated on this project, but had as constantly found it opposed by the apparent impracticability of

the undertaking, from the stupendous height of the rocks, and the solid uniform texture of their flinty sides. He now, however, found nothing to impede his progress, but was wafted with airy velocity to the opposite side. The exultation of Obadiah was short: he found himself on a naked and desolate plain, "where meagre famine sat in solitary state;"—and discomforted and disappointed he turned with anguish to survey the paths that led to the rocks he had left. He gazed in stupid wonder; for, far as his eyes could stretch, he beheld around the same flat and arid face of nature. He lamented his folly in all the wild expressions of despair, and, sinking to the earth, gave himself up, as he thought, to inevitable destruction. A momentary forgetfulness was succeeded by new wonders. On awaking from this stupor, he saw around him a paradise similar to the promised abode of the faithful. All that the most elaborate fancy can paint, or desire covet, was spread with profusion before the enchanted senses of Obadiah. As he stood

contemplating

contemplating with delight the beauteous scene, he was suddenly struck by hearing his name in gentle accents repeatedly called; and, on turning himself to the sound, he found near him a group of young females, fair as the houris of that paradise of which he now thought himself an inhabitant. They welcomed him in the sweetest accents to his new abode, and with courtesy offered to conduct him to the palace of their sovereign.

The willing Obadiah followed their light footsteps with prompt obedience, praising Mahomet for his singular favour. His beautiful guides led him to a magnificent structure, in which art and the riches of worlds had apparently united their powers to furnish its splendid decorations. A sofa of down received the passive Obadiah, whilst a bath of perfumed water was hastily prepared for his use; robes of the richest texture met his ready hand; and a crowd of obsequious slaves, with eager solicitude, served in silence around him. A banquet,

prepared by the hand of luxury, invited his appetite; whilst the soft and swelling harmony of more than mortal sounds enwrapped the soul of Obadiah in its fascinating ecstasy. At length an impulse of curiosity recalled him to the wonderful circumstances of his happy situation; and encouraged by the kindness of his companions at the banquet, he ventured to ask the cause of a reception so flattering and so unexpected. "I am unconscious," said Obadiah, "of the visit of the angel of Death: tell me by what means I have been thus translated to the abode of the faithful." His gay auditors, laughing, assured him that he was still an inhabitant of a much lower region: "But, under the gentle sway of *Pleasure*," added they, "thou wilt soon forget Mahomet and his fancied paradise. The welcome which thou hast received," continued they, "is the common one that our indulgent mistress gives to *all* who seek her favour. Thou hast escaped from the rocks of Restraint, thou hast boldly shaken off the shackles of Labour, and the bondage

bondage of cold-hearted Age and rigid Prudence.... Drink of this cup, and forget thy past toils and abject humiliation." Obadiah seized the sparkling goblet with avidity: he drank deeply, and in an instant every past transaction of his life was effaced from his memory.

Elevated with new hopes, and impelled by new desires, he now, with joyous alacrity, followed his new guides to the throne of the goddess. She received him with smiles and blandishments; and, after listening with complacency to his declaration of future allegiance, dismissed him, by bidding him not to fear a power whose laws were to render man free and happy... On retiring from the presence of the goddess, Obadiah asked who were the three persons whom he had observed crouched behind the throne, apparently with the intention of being concealed from all eyes. "Are they," said Obadiah, "offenders? for they were covered to the girdle with an impenetrable black veil, and appeared to me unfit objects for a temple so

gay

gay and brilliant."—"We know little of them," answered one of the jocund group. "We have, indeed, heard, that, some time since, some strangers visited this happy country, and still continue to do so from time to time: but, as they always refuse the customary tribute, and discover a contempt of our laws, they are always ignominiously banished; notwithstanding they plead in their excuse the commands of an ancient oracle, which warns them to refuse our laws, and to despise our sovereign. It may be, that those whom thou hast noticed belong to these severe and insolent travellers; and that, as thou hast surmised, they are doing penance for their contumelious conduct. But, were curiosity or inquiry not forbidden to the subjects of Pleasure, the mystery which hangs about these persons might excite a desire of knowing their peculiar destination and office; for they appear to be attached to the goddess by an irrevocable decree of fate, and wherever she moves they follow with unwearied steps.....and concealed, as thou

saw'st

sawest them....But the precious moments," added the speaker, "are escaping us.... let us enjoy them."

Obadiah wanted no incitements—he returned to the cup of forgetfulness, and in noisy revelry indulged, uncontrolled, in his imaginary felicity.....At length he discovered that the wine had lost its flavour and it ssubduing power....He redoubled his draught, and thought it even nauseous.... his disgusted palate refused it....and he pushed the goblet from him...The goddess frowned.:...she turned away her face, and fled with precipitation from her terrified votary. With hasty steps Obadiah followed her in order to sue for pardon...He traced her footsteps through all the intricacies of the palace, and the adjoining grottos.....She still fled. .and with impetuous speed Obadiah pursued.....In her rapid flight she dropped the mask which bore the semblance of youthful beauty, and, suddenly turning on the panting Obadiah, exhibited an aspect which stiffened him into palpitating horror.

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As he gazed on the hideous phantom, it melted into air; and Obadiah, casting down his aching eyes, perceived the beauteous mask of the goddess lying at his feet. He spurned it from him with indignation, exclaiming, "Is this, then, the object of my senseless worship? Is this painted pageant the idol to which I have bowed?" He stooped to take in his hand the evidence of his folly and credulity: but, on reaching forth his hand, it crumbled to dust, and thus eluded his examination.

Before he could recover from this new surprise, he was rudely grasped by some one behind him; and turning hastily to see his assailant, he discovered the three unknown personages who had so much excited his curiosity. A sudden awe and dread seized his spirits, and he stood confounded and trembling before them. They were no longer veiled; but looked like emaciated spectres, and were bending with age and decrepitude. With palsied hands they threw around him some slight bands, and,

each

each holding a part, were on the point of leading him from the spot on which he stood.

Obadiah, disdaining foes so feeble, and blushing at a passiveness which his surprise had occasioned, now, with a smile of scorn, attempted to free himself from such impotent shackles. But chains of adamantine strength could not more effectually have retained their prisoner. Obadiah felt himself controlled by a power which was too mighty to be contended with. "Thou findest," said one of the persons, "that thy efforts are vain: —and yet, Obadiah, thou hast broken with ease each of these bonds, many times, when singly applied in order to check thy mad career. But know, unhappy man, that *Conscience* is not to be foiled in her purpose. The opiate of Pleasure's deadly cup may lull her voice to temporary repose; but she rises with redoubled force from her lethargic slumbers; and now brings me, her minister, *Remorse*, to seize my prey....Here," cried he with a stern and hollow voice, "is my

mandate—read thy condemnation!" Obadiah cast his eyes on the open scroll before him, and saw these words:

"Thou hast, Obadiah, madly and foolishly pursued *Pleasure*. Thou hast discovered her deceitfulness, and she abjureth thee for ever, and now consigneth thee to the sharers of her power and dominion. From this destiny thou hast no appeal; for thus hath it been ordained by a decree to which all created beings bend with awful submission. But know, weak man! that thou wast their captive before thou sawest the allurements of Pleasure. They have been thy unsuspected companions and secret inmates, from the hour in which thy sickly heart turned away from labour, competence, and tranquillity; and their arm hath been stretched out to seize thee, from the instant that thou forgot the duty of a son, and left thy father in his old age to sink with sorrow to his grave."

Obadiah uttered a deep groan—remembrance, like the forked and vivid lightning, burst

burst on his mental eye.—*Remorse* with ghastly smile presented a small mirror..... "This," cried he with exulting scorn, "this also is mine, to show thee what thou art!" Obadiah instinctively turned his hitherto averted eyes, and beheld an image reflected which appalled him—It was indeed Obadiah ... but how unlike the vigorous and blooming son of Naphor! His countenance now bore the deadly hue of pallid disease.... his eyes were sunk.... his limbs feeble and shrunk.... and his body swollen and dropsical.... his head bare.... his sandals old and useless.... and a dirty, tattered robe hung on his shoulders..... "These are my trappings," said a second of the terrifying guards of Obadiah, laying upon him a hand as cold as an icicle: "the children of *Penury* know nothing of the gorgeous apparel or sumptuous provision of the goddess that thou hast worshipped. But I am not always the obdurate parent which thou findest me, Obadiah.... thy maladies are not in the number of *my* gifts. Cold and nakedness make

make not such victims for death, as riot and intemperance. Thou must now follow me. *Conscience* hath awakened thee, *Remorse* will be thy future companion, and *Penury* will consign thee to thy grave."... "No," exclaimed the indignant Obadiah, "no! I will seek in repentance, and a renewed heart, for help to save me from thy power. Shame and remorse are the portion of those without hope. I bow to their chastenings, and bless their probing hand: but whilst they strike they heal; and *Repentance* will still conduct my erring feet to the throne of Allah..... But thou, insidious foe to man! subduest those powers which are given to him for his defence; and whilst thou unnervest his hand for the labour which would protect him from thy hard authority, thou hardenest his heart to works of deadly mischief.... I disclaim thy power!.... Shackled as I am, these arms shall break thy bonds; for I will still live, and eat the bread of industry." The spectre, collected, threw her meagre arms around Obadiah.... He struggled to free

free himself from her direful embrace . . . his efforts burst asunder the bonds of sleep and he heard his father's voice loudly and repeatedly calling his name. But a lethargic stupor still suspended the faculties of Obadiah, and he was unable to answer.

His father, on returning from his little voyage, found the provisions which he had left, untasted, and his son absent. He sought him with alarm; for the darkness of night began to overshadow the earth: and he at length discovered him by the whiteness of his vest, faint, and almost lifeless, under the palm-tree. With tender haste he administered a cordial, and conveyed him to the sofa Obadiah, passively receiving his parental cares, gazed on his face, and with mute astonishment surveyed every object which met his inquiring eye.

Naphor took his hand. "My son!" cried he, "speak to thy father: relieve him, if it be possible, from the fears which now oppress him." Obadiah burst into tears, and, throwing himself at Naphor's feet, faintly uttered,

uttered, "Have I still a father? or do I still dream?".... Naphor, somewhat reassured, with gentle soothings besought him to take some refreshment; and Obadiah recovered his spirits by degrees.

He now recounted to his attentive father the vision of the day; and with ingenuous humility confessed his past discontents and repining ingratitude; imploring his pardon, and assuring him that he had been taught wisdom by his eventful dream; which he should always consider as the particular favour and interposition of the Great Prophet..... "We will not," said Naphor, "lose the instruction of this hour in conjectures beyond our reach. It is enough for us to know that Allah reigneth, and that the creatures of his power are the objects of his providential care. We know not the instruments of his unerring will; —but we know that he employs *none* by which the happiness of his creatures is not ultimately advanced. Regard the lesson of this day as an act of his gracious purposes,

and

and treasure it in thy heart as the evidence of his goodness. Let it serve to correct the mistakes to which thy youth and inexperience are exposed. Thy dream, my son, is no fable. Believe thy father, its colourings are drawn from that world which thou art so impatient to encounter. Thy father, Obadiah, hath been deluded by Pleasure. He hath been betrayed by Hypocrisy ... insulted by Pride .. impoverished by Injustice ... and abandoned by pretended friends... One precious blessing still was left me!" added Naphor deeply sighing: "with that, and my integrity, I sought peace in this retreat.—But I will not deceive thee, my son. Amidst guile and the corrupting influence of example, thou oughtest to see my weakness. I preferred greatness to independence. My friends were selected from the votaries of Pleasure, rather than sedulously sought for amongst the modest and retiring children of Virtue ... I laughed at the prudence of Age, and, confiding in my strength, became an easy prey to the designing.

"But

"But this world, encompassed as it may be with danger and difficulty to thee, is the theatre on which thou art destined to act thy part: nor is it the intention of Naphor to counteract the will of Allah, even by an impotent wish . . . Go, and act thy part wisely . . . Thou mayst find goodness and safety; but thou must be good, and thy desires moderate, if thou meanest to tread in the paths of security. Go, my son, and the blessing of Allah be thy portion! But marvel not if I predict that thou wilt again seek the face of thy father in this abode of repose and safety . . . Thou mayst seek it in vain; for the angel of Death may have reunited me to my beloved Fatima Approach not our grave with unhallowed feet: bring to it thy innocence, thy ingenuous nature, thy piety towards the great Allah, or shun it; for thou wilt disturb the ashes of those who gave thee life."

"Yes," exclaimed Obadiah with emotion, "I *will* beware; for I will never hazard an experiment which may render me unworthy

worthy of partaking, with the authors of my being, of the same honoured grave, and of the joyful hopes with which they met it... Never will I quit thy protecting side... Never will I abandon my father in his declining age nor forget the hand which sustained my infant weakness."

"Son of my Fatima!" said the subdued Naphor, sinking into the arms of Obadiah, "living and perfect image of her fidelity and love!—we will not be separated.... Thy father shall still guide thy steps... We will prepare for the voyage, and encounter its perils together. Thy strength and vigour shall support my weakness, and my experience shall be thy safeguard. Thou shalt live to adore the wisdom and goodness which have thus provided for the safety and comfort of man; and thy children shall recompense thy filial love."

Thus saying, each retired to his quiet repose; and the renewed peace of Obadiah was undisturbed.

Letter XII.

HAMET,

AN

ALLEGORICAL TALE.

Hamet was the child of Abundance, he was nursed on the knees of Luxury; his attendants were the servile and trembling slaves of his ungoverned and capricious will; and his guides, the debasing and frivolous dependants of Pleasure. The singular beauty of his person, the grace and vigour which dignified his youth, encouraged in his mind a contemptuous scorn towards his inferiors; and from the elevation of his rank he looked down with senseless pride on all whom he arrogantly thought beneath him. His surrounding parasites addressed him by the superb title of "the Favourite of Mahomet;" and Hamet doubted not but that he had an unquestionable right to this high appellation, and to the privileges annexed

annexed to it; and of these power was the first.

At the age of seventeen he was the uncontrolled master of himself, and of his father's immense riches. Achmet, the parent of the young Hamet, had at his death powerful motives for leaving to his son this dangerous liberty, which were not only strenuously opposed by the prudence of age, but also by avarice. But Achmet could not forget the means by which he had acquired his large possessions, nor the dangers that he had with so much anxious care seen suspended over his devoted head. He well knew that the witnesses of his peculations, and the injured objects of his injustice, waited only for the support of power and influence to carry their complaints to the feet of the sultan, and to find ample vengeance in his ruin. Achmet had long foreseen that his credit with his despotic master was sinking, and only wanted this discovery totally to annihilate it, and to overwhelm him in its fall. With these fears brooding in

in his mind, Achmet had for some time retired from public observation. His sumptuous palace at Bagdad was quitted for a retreat at some distance from it, which was called "the Pavilion of the Seven Mountains." Its peculiar situation gave this denomination to the house, which was built on the side of one of seven mountains, that with sudden and irregular grandeur rose from the bosom of a widely extended plain of barren aspect; and the vegetation of the mountains afforded nothing beyond pasture for the wild goats, and a refuge for a few scattered and miserable peasants.

In this seclusion from the world Achmet sought precarious safety; but the end of his greatness was hourly approaching, and his sinking spirits warned him that the enemy he had to encounter was not to be baffled or circumvented. Persuaded of his speedy dissolution, he commanded his son into his apartment, and ordered the slaves to withdraw. They obeyed, and Hamet remained by his dying father's couch.

"Thou

"Thou seest," said Achmet, "the end of human greatness. The angel of Death hovers over thy father, and may perhaps arrest the words I now wish to utter. Listen to me with attention, and respect the counsel which means to provide for thy safety. I leave to thee, Hamet, abundant wealth and numerous foes: but thy security has been my vigilant care: the first stone of this edifice had for its object thy preservation, and that of thy fortune. It is now time for me to unfold to thee the secret of this retreat, and to account for that wisdom in the selection of this spot, which has been called folly. Know then, that the base of the obelisk erected in honour of the sultan is not what it appears to be. It is hollow, and conceals the entrance to a treasure more precious and more abundant than that which thou wilt publicly succeed to as the heir of Achmet. In a small iron coffer deposited in the base thou wilt find a roll of vellum, on which is faithfully and exactly delineated the passage to the caverns beneath;

neath; for these are intricate and perilous. On the morning preceding the anniversary of the day of thy birth, watch with observant eye the first ray of the sun that strikes on the obelisk; observe the identical point when it touches the edge of the base. Press with thy hand that part, and the secret spring will yield, and disclose to thee, with the instructions which thou wilt stand in need of, a place of refuge from thy enemies. Be grateful for thy father's provident care; thy asylum is prepared, thy wants are provided for, and the means of thy emancipation from the caverns will be with thee, when prudence warrants thy departure. Bless the Great Prophet, who has spared me from the bow-string for thy sake. Preserve thy secret, and be wise."

Achmet ceased to speak and to breathe almost at the same instant.

Hamet retained in his memory his father's instructions to the concealed treasure, laughed at his predictions of danger, and scorned enemies whom he knew not. He gave

orders

orders for the funeral obsequies of Achmet; in which was displayed more of ostentatious pomp than of filial sorrow. A magnificent mosque and mausoleum were erected in honour of "the noble and magnanimous bashaw Achmet;" and Hamet was satisfied that he had faithfully acquitted himself of all the duties of a son. Convinced that a visit to the caverns was unnecessary for the present, he hastened to Bagdad, and resigned himself to the enjoyment of his smiling fortune, with all the wild profusion of his inordinate wishes.

His palace and gardens became the wonder of Bagdad, and his seraglio the envy of the East. Misery and Want heard of "the favourite of Mahomet," and pressed with plaintive cries around his gates. But their complaints were, by the command of Hamet, answered by menaces and stripes; and the most ferocious and sturdy of his slaves were appointed to drive them from the sight of their master; for Hamet's heart was dead to pity, and his fastidious eyes turned with disgust

disgust from the squalid wretchedness of age and sickness. Even the slaves of his household, whose years or countenances displeased him, were banished from his presence; and disregarding the infirmities of that age, or their former services, he left them to the rude labours imposed upon them by the vile instruments of his power.

In the number of these degraded slaves were four who had enjoyed the favour and protection of his father. They had superintended in his apartment, whilst yet an infant. To their faithful trust was his unguarded youth consigned, and with fidelity and attention they had endeavoured to check his headstrong passions, and open his heart to the precepts of wisdom. They had followed his wayward steps with gentleness and patience, and with address and zeal promoted every indication of docility and attention. But Hamet found their honesty offensive, and their services officious. They were banished from his apartments, and he scarcely knew that they lived in the

crowd

crowd of menial slaves, who were employed in the gardens.

The new attendants who succeeded to their posts not unfrequently envied them their degraded stations, notwithstanding the toil annexed to it. Those amongst them who could administer new pleasures to the palled fancy of Hamet, or succeed in rousing his satiated appetite for the banquet, enjoyed an influence which nothing could withstand, but which hung on the caprice of the moment, and the sudden and unrelenting fury of *their slave* and *tyrant*.

But "the Favourite of Mahomet" soon discovered his powers limited, and his indulgences controlled, by an enemy that he did not expect. His habitual indolence, the intemperance of his life, and the violence of his temper, soon manifested their effects on his health. Sleep fled from his downy embroidered sofa; a feverish heat throbbed in his veins; the debility of age shook his palsied hand; and the blooming and vigorous Hamet became the declared victim of

excess and disease. His malady baffled the art of healing. The physicians of Bagdad and of the neighbouring provinces failed in every means of relief for their munificent patient; and the languid Hamet dismissed them with querulous complaints of his disappointment, and contemptuous reproaches for their ignorance.

A slave, the favourite of the hour, now spoke of a stranger, whose wonderful skill in medicine, and success in curing the sick, were the conversation of all Bagdad; and whose wisdom and urbanity soothed and comforted those whom he could not save from death. The slave was dispatched, with eager haste, to seek this benevolent and skilful man, and the drooping Hamet waited his arrival with renewed hope and restless impatience. At length a man venerable in age stood before him: his eyes were piercing and intelligent, the glow of health animated his cheek, and bestowed dignity and grace on a flowing beard as white as snow. His stature was tall and commanding,

commanding, his dress simple, and his manners grave but courteous. He fixed his attentive eyes on Hamet, and his countenance sunk into paleness and dejection. He questioned him. A profound sigh escaped him, and his eyes became humid. "I see," said the terrified and trembling Hamet, "that I have nothing to hope."—"Allah forbid!" answered the stranger with increasing emotion: "I trust that my endeavours, and thy persevering prudence, will save thee. Be of good courage. But my skill is vain, unless it meet with docility. Abstain from thy excesses. For this cause art thou visited by sickness: thy Prophet chastens thee, for thou hast transgressed his law. Seek with diligence the spring of Health: so shall thy soul live, and thy strength be renewed." The guests of Hamet laughed aloud without check or control. The stranger, with a severe and untroubled countenance, gazed at them in silence—"I perceive," said he with dignity, "that my advice accords not with the opinion of those around thee. I leave thee to decide in

a matter in which I at least have neither flattered thy weakness nor abused thy credulity." Thus saying, he slowly and majestically quitted the apartment. Hamet, impressed with an undefinable respect for a man who had not bowed before him, or been awed by his grandeur, fretfully reproved his friends for the levity and indecorum of their behaviour, and blamed a conduct which had, in the first instance, been encouraged by his approving smile. He dismissed them with sullenness, and in haste recalled the unknown physician.—With something like an apology for the incivility of his late reception, he entreated to be informed of those means by which he could find the spring of Health. "I have wealth wherewith to purchase it," said Hamet: "I have power to command it; slaves in abundance to seek it; and friends who at the peril of their own lives will encounter any danger that may guard it."—"The zeal of those whom thou callest thy friends," replied with solemnity the unknown,

known, " availeth thee nothing. Thy wealth and thy power are useless; thy slaves will fail; no hand but thine own can reach it; from all beside it will recede.— Thou must seek it unaccompanied, unattended, or thy search will be futile. Be not deceived, Hamet," continued he with awe-inspiring authority, " thou art on the verge of the grave; the angel of Death waits only the awful mandate, to strike thee to the dust. Go to thy pavilion of the Seven Mountains. I am permitted to tell thee, that the spring of Health is on the summit of one of those heights which surround thy retreat, and encircle thine abode. Go fearlessly, and wait alone the interposition and instructions of thy guardian angel." Hamet, struck with terror at the solemn import of the stranger's words, closed his eyes with dismay and a sudden faintness. The attending slaves crowded to his succour, and in that moment of officious zeal the stranger disappeared. Surprise instantly followed his retreat. The most diligent search ensued;

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he was to be traced neither in the avenues of the palace, nor in the gardens; nor to be found in Bagdad. Hamet was troubled and confounded. His slaves pronounced the unknown a magician, and warned their master to beware of him. His companions laughed at their superstition, and called him an artful impostor, who had wisely shunned the detection he feared. But Hamet, with his usual arrogance and inflated hopes, decided in his own mind, that he was a special messenger sent by the Prophet to warn him of his danger, and to prescribe the certain means of avoiding it; and he determined to follow implicitly the supernatural agent's advice and orders. The preparations for the short pilgrimage of Hamet would have sufficed for a troop of true mussulmen for one to Mecca: and if levelling the seven mountains by the agency of others could have accomplished Hamet's wishes, he would have attempted the enterprise; for he regarded his present weakness with trembling forebodings, and dreaded

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an effort from which in the pride of his strength he would have shrunk. For some time he hesitated: the idea of being left without a single slave to wait upon him sunk him to the imbecility of an infant, and he wept like one. The urgency of his condition, and the desire of life, at length prevailed, and Hamet dismissed his attendants from the pavilion. His bath was prepared, the rich carpets spread for his repose, light and commodious vestments left within his reach, and a repast of choice and various viands placed in order. Hamet sullenly observed their duteous cares; and they left him to the hope that they were needless, for that in the protection of Mahomet he should find a speedy change in his situation. New to the solitude which depressed him, Hamet wandered into the delicious gardens which enclosed the pavilion on all sides; and of which the high walls formed an insurmountable barrier to the incursions of the lawless from without, and the premeditated escape of the slaves of unjust

unjust power from within. He carelessly threw himself by the side of a fountain, and, lulled by its murmurs, sunk into repose.—On awaking, he found himself refreshed by his slumbers, and the cool breezes of the evening; and excited by a slight return of appetite, he returned to his apartment, intending to satisfy it with the provision so sedulously prepared for him. He was astonished at seeing all that had spread the luxurious board removed, and in the stead, a plate of boiled rice, a few dates, and a bowl of sherbet. . . . Near these were placed an ivory tablet, and a small phial containing a red coloured liquor. He seized with sudden impulse the tablet, and read as follows: "The safety and life of the son of Achmet depend on his obedience. He must submit to the power which now governs him. The elixir in the phial must be carefully preserved. He will have notice when to apply it to its destined use. Resistance is vain. If he look on the face of man till his probation is finished, he will

return

return to Bagdad, and share with his father the honours of his magnificent tomb." " Traitor!" exclaimed the indignant Hamet, " thy purpose is now declared, although thy vile motives are yet concealed. But I will search for them in thy cowardly heart; and though that death with which thou so impotently menacest me were the sure consequence, I will be satisfied and revenged." He rushed with impetuous fury to the gate. It resisted his attempts to open it; and panting with returning weakness and increased impatience, he discovered that he was confined beyond the possibility of an escape.— He cursed aloud his own credulity, and the provident care of his father, who had thus prepared him a prison. Exhausted by his vain efforts to free himself, faint with thirst and the fever that preyed on his agitated frame, he returned to the apartment which he had left. On eagerly reaching his hand to the sherbet, he discovered new instructions from the invisible agent in whose power he now felt himself. On a scroll of

vellum he read these words: "The mind of the wise man meets fortune with firmness and patience. It seeks in its own resources those arms with which it is necessary for him to encounter unprosperous events. It surveys with steady eye darkness and clouds encompassing the face of nature; taught by experience that the great source of light and of life is at that very moment dispensing its accustomed blessings to worlds around. Thus, with equal security, does it rest in the dark profound of trial and difficulty, and traces to the Author of all good those events that shadow over its day of enlivening sunshine. It knows that the time is fast approaching when Allah will manifest himself in all his ways; and recompense those who humbly rely on his wisdom, and with patience and persevering courage sustain the part allotted to them." The heart of Hamet received the salutary lesson with sullen sadness. Weary and forlorn, he sought in sleep a refuge from his uneasy thoughts; and stretched on his

his sofa, his unquiet mind sunk into temporary oblivion. The singing of the birds awakened Hamet before the sun had gilded the horizon. He started from his couch, and repaired to the garden more actuated by the desire of changing his place than by that of inhaling the invigorating breath of the morn. Nature smiled around him, and insensibly diffused some portion of her sweet and peaceful influence over the dejected Hamet. He stood motionless, gazing, with admiration and new sensations of delight, on the glorious orb of day rising in majesty, and chasing from the mountain tops the vapours of the night. The carroling of the birds ceased for a moment at the sight of his irradiating beams, as if to collect in one universal chorus to hail the tutelary god of the creation. Hamet with involuntary piety fell on his face, and adored Him who appointed the sun in its course, and commanded the light to shine and bless his creation. An unspeakable emotion penetrated his soul..... "How has it happened."

ed," thought he, " that till this moment of doubt and of danger my soul has remained insensible? To my eyes only has the sun hitherto communicated its light.—The sweets of spring diffused no peculiar joy over the heart of Hamet. Autumn gave in its rich harvest, and the hymn of gratitude never passed his lips. Is it that until this hour I have been fettered in a dungeon? or that my present prison is the destined place of emancipation from mental darkness and stupid obduracy?—Be it so.—And let this propitious hour be the forerunner of days bearing pleasures that will not satiate, as those have done in which the life of the unfortunate Hamet has been sunk."

A tear fell on the pallid cheek of the subdued Hamet: but his heart was soothed, he returned composed to his apartment, and drank without murmuring of some goat's milk provided for his repast. His unpractised mind soon however sunk into listless discontent..." Had I," said he aloud, " but

one

one of those numerous friends who are, in anxious solicitude for my safety, regretting my absence from Bagdad!—had I but *one* to cheer this solitude, I could with patience remain in it—but to be thus cut off from the sight of man is insupportable!"—"Those whom thou credulously callest thy friends," answered an audible whisper, "are now revelling in thy palace, and laughing at thy folly." The astonished Hamet looked fearfully around him—all was silent—and he determined to explore every part of the habitation. He left the rotunda, and with eager hope examined every approach to it: each apartment was visited with the most exact scrutiny, and disappointed and restless he returned to the central room he had quitted. In the midst of it stood a reading-desk, on which was placed the Koran; and in the usual characters was written on a label "*Behold thy Friend.*"

Hamet, not doubting but that he was under the control of a power which he was unable to resist, passively obeyed. He placed

placed himself before the holy book, and his mind insensibly became interested by its sublime and consoling doctrines. He forgot the passing hours, till the setting sun reminded him of his pious resolutions. He performed his ablutions, and for the first time in his life tasted the glorious privilege of Man communing with his Maker.—Hamet prayed with fervour and sincerity of heart. He asked of Heaven an enlightened mind; and he returned with tranquillity and hope to calm repose. The truths of religion now poured daily into the purified heart of Hamet their salutary balm. The temperance of his board had restored health and vigour to his body; he was familiarized with solitude; and found pleasure in working in the garden, and watering the parterres. He saw with composure that his invisible guide presented him with new instructions, and he read them with the firm purpose of obedience. He learned that on the night of the approaching full moon he was to prepare for his departure. An

abstinence

abstinence of twelve hours from food was enjoined for the preceding day, and the elixir was to be swallowed at sun-set. Hamet had now no fears. "The friend of Allah," said he, "cannot be my enemy. I have learned to trust to a power that can save me from a host, if in its wisdom it see fit to spare me; and in that protection I will trust." He had still two or three days to wait the appointed time; and he recollected that his birth-day was included in the period. "My course is uncertain," thought Hamet. "I am not forbidden to provide for the necessities of it. I will profit from the present hour to visit the caverns, and from thence take a supply that may be needful." This purpose engaged so much of his attention, that at the dawn of day Hamet was at the obelisk. But a moment sufficed to show him that his labours had been prevented. The iron coffer was before him, and contained nothing but the ivory tablet, on which was written.... "Seek not, Hamet, those riches which

which endure not. Seek wisdom, and get understanding. Gold has already betrayed thee. Trust no more to thy insidious foe." —"Angel of Truth!" exclaimed Hamet, "I acknowledge thy admonition, and submit to thy wisdom. Yes: gold has indeed betrayed me: its fatal influence robbed my youth of instruction, fostered every passion of my degraded soul, subdued its energies, or converted them to frantic violence.— It has rendered my more mature age like a sick man's dream; my life has been without honour, and my existence useless to all."— Hamet paused, and wept aloud. "Hope!" murmured a voice from the pedestal, "*Hamet is not lost!*"—"My guardian angel is with me," exultingly cried Hamet: "I *will* hope; and in this moment cast far from me the fetters which have withheld me from the true dignity of man." All was silence—and Hamet with humble prayer fortified his tranquillity and his resolution. At the hour prescribed he swallowed the elixir. Sleep sealed his eyes,

and

and fancy wove from the impressions of his mind the following vision.

Hamet thought he hailed the rising sun. Sallying forth from the wide extended gates of the pavilion, elate with hope, and vigorous in his newly acquired strength, he ascended the first mountain with light and easy step; but, as he gained the summit, the scanty verdure gave place to the naked and barren rock. The head of the mountain consisted of a rude mass of stone, where not even moss vegetated. "My labour," thought Hamet, "is only begun as yet. This desolate spot contains not the spring of Health. I must proceed."..... He now trod with more cautious steps the declivity of the mountain on the opposite side: his path was perilous; and whilst he searched safety for his foot, the sound of a water-fall reached his ear..... He listened with mute attention. It murmured distinctly, and he followed the sound. It brought him to a chasm in the rock; and he judged that the spring was concealed in its dark bosom.

bosom. He entered boldly, and continued his devious course, till an imperfect light, glimmering through the crevices of the ponderous roof, discovered to him that he was in an immense cavern. It appeared as though Nature had destined it for the anti-chamber to her dark abode; for the yawning openings to different recesses confounded Hamet's choice. The inviting sound of the water was become more distant, and only reached him by intervals. He stood irresolute; when again it reached his ear, from a passage so narrow as to have been unnoticed by him. He hastily turned in, and found with some surprise, that he descended a broken flight of steps, evidently the work of man. He pursued the path, however, which he hoped would terminate his toil; and the sight of a lamp, which at that moment emitted its sickly rays from the roof whence it was suspended, confirmed his hopes. "This," said Hamet, "has been probably placed near the spring, by the care of some one who visits it, and

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who has experienced, with its salutary effects, the difficulty of approaching it." He pressed forward; and the irregular descent brought him to a small cavern, in which hung a larger and brighter lamp. Surprise for some moments banished every thought of Hamet's purpose, on his perceiving that this subterraneous abode had recently been the shelter of man. Some embers were yet glowing on the earth.....parts of dirty and tattered vestments were scattered around the remnants of a repast stood on the lid of a large chest; and a vase of water by its side invited Hamet's thirst.....He reached forward to grasp it, when his eyes met the name of *Achmet* engraven on the chest. He now concluded that he was in the cavern in which his father had concealed with so much care his treasures; and that it was in the power of those who had discovered the secret, and who still availed themselves of the recess as a place of concealment, and the scene of their fu-

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ture crimes. Struck with this idea, he hastily quitted the cavern, in order to evade the banditti whose resort it appeared to be. He had nearly reached the entrance to the large cavern, when a blow on his head laid him senseless. On recovering from his stupor he found himself in the cavern from which he had with precipitation fled, and surrounded by six or more of his own slaves, who were busily administering relief. With furious looks and in a menacing tone Hamet demanded the purpose which had brought them to that place.....who had given him the blow.....and what were their intentions in regard to their master; and drawing a poniard from his vest, he swore by his Prophet, that "he would sell his life dearly." One of the slaves, with cool and sarcastic contempt, bade him not fear outrage. "We have," said he, "business of more consequence before us than taking vengeance on an impotent tyrant. We are not without arms," added he

he with a look of defiance: "but thy life is safe, Hamet, if thou willest that it should be so.... and what is more, we will befriend thee. Know then, that the aga with his janissaries is at this hour in possession of thy palace at Bagdad; and that thy pavilion of retreat is now in ruins. A price, and no small one, is affixed to thy head, and the most diligent search follows thy fugitive steps. In the confusion of the hour, and conducted by thy slave Selim, we escaped, to double the number of that now before thee, to this asylum; in which we discovered a treasure, not the less welcome for being unlooked for, and, with this, a provision for our sustenance still more precious.... All is now safely deposited in a bark on the Tigris, and guarded by Selim and our other companions. In our haste to remove it from hence, we left behind us a casket, which we suppose to be a rich one. We determined on returning hither for it. On entering the passage to this cavern, we found our way impeded by

by some one apparently without life; and desirous of knowing what such an intruder boded for us, and as willing to assist the miserable creature, we took up the body, and found it was thee. We succoured thee, Hamet, for we had eaten of thy bread. I suppose," added the slave, "that in thy haste to quit the cavern thou detachedst with thy hand a loose piece of the rock; for, as I recollect, thou wast covered with the fallen fragments. We are now on the point of quitting thee and this spot for ever. Presume not to follow us. Thy destiny is changed, and so is ours: we go to enjoy in peace that freedom from bondage which belongs to man. It may be that thou hast to taste the privation of this first and best blessing. If *slavery* should be thy lot, remember, not to repine at the harshness of thy *master:* but think of the proud and inflexible Hamet, and of those of his slaves who returned him good for evil . . . We leave thee water and rice enough to sustain thee for some days, and counsel thee not to quit thy present asylum."

asylum." Thus saying, with an air of cool intrepidity he struck the casket against the rock with repeated efforts. It yielded to the blows, and discovered its rich contents of precious gems. Each secreted a part in his turban, and left the forlorn Hamet to his meditations.

"This then," said he, stretching himself on the bare ground, "is human greatness. The slave who trembled before me, and saluted me from the dust, now insults, defies, and abandons me! But," continued he, rising with collected firmness, "this annihilation of my greatness has not taken away that which is properly my own. Nature has given me powers for the express purpose of combating with evils like these ... In my fall, I will rise into *real* greatness, and by patience and fortitude show that I am a man. I will quit this tomb of voluntary death. Allah will provide me a more honourable one."—He slowly and safely quitted the caverns, not without surprise that he no longer heard the most remote

mote sound of the water, which had allured him into the recess. He now regretted the time that his unsuccessful search had occasioned to elapse. His spirits were troubled by the information which his slaves had given him; and he had no guide for his steps, nor any refuge for his wants. The moon rose with a cloudy and a troubled aspect; the air became oppressive with heat; and Hamet, faint and weary, sunk to the earth. An awful silence portended the rising storm —it broke with tremendous sounds on his defenceless head and Hamet then first discovered that he had lost his turban. Peal succeeded peal of loud and prolonged thunder the lightnings flashed, but to shed deeper horror on surrounding darkness ... the moon had hidden her light, obscured by the contending elements. Drenched with impetuous rain, and appalled by the novelty of his situation, the heart of Hamet sunk within him, and he thought of his luxurious couch at Bagdad with anguish of soul. The plaintive cries of children

now

now met his ear, and disturbed his meditations. He started up, and, following the sounds, saw himself before a cave, formed by the projection of two large pieces of rock. Near the entrance stood a lamp on the ground, and round it were two or three naked children huddled together, and contesting for some coarse bread. Fearful of alarming them, Hamet with gentleness asked for shelter. "Enter freely," replied a feeble voice from the more distant part of the cave: "this abode is the boon of Nature for the wretched; and if Misery conduct thee, it is thine to share with me." He advanced, and saw the attenuated form of a woman busily engaged in selecting some rice-stalks from a large quantity of weeds... She raised her haggard eyes to meet the salutation of Hamet: but no sooner had she with fixed attention surveyed his countenance, than the livid paleness of her cheek gave place to the flushings of fury; her meagre and languid form stood firm and collected. She sprang

forward, and, seizing him by his tunic, forcibly drew him towards the lamp; where with silent and curious malignity she again examined him. At length with an exulting grin, and a piercing voice, she exclaimed, "Is it then come to *this?* Is this indeed Hamet, the 'favourite of Mahomet?' Is it come to this?" repeated she, clapping her hands in scornful mockery. "Does *he* seek a refuge with *Misery* and *Want?*"

"Fly," said she with stern contempt, "fly, obdurate son of pride! ere thou learnest that wretchedness hardens the human heart to cruelty, as effectually as revelry and riot. I have no slaves to drive thee from my dwelling; I have no insolent high-fed minions to chase thee with whips, and taunts more cruel, from my door. My power is in my necessities; and these," added she, drawing a poniard from her breast, "give nerves of steel to my hand! Look at those helpless beings, Hamet," continued she, softening.—"Behold them, emaciated with hunger, disabled by sickness and want! They once rivalled

rivalled thy infant graces; they once blessed a mother's eyes with comeliness of form and promising vigour. Look at them *now*, and listen to the truths their pallid faces and distorted limbs convey to thy heart. It was thy senseless profusion, it was thy hard neglect, Hamet, which rendered them what they now are. That bauble which uselessly glitters on thy breast would have fed, clothed, cherished them! O wretched man! how hast thou lived, insensible to all the blessings of abundance! how hast thou trodden with impious feet on thy duty! Depart, and feel what it is to live with Penury and Remorse."

Hamet, with conscious shame and repentant sighs, left the gem which fastened his vest. With silent agitation, and with humility bowing to his harsh monitress, he quitted the cave. The storm without was appeased....the moon was now sailing in full majesty and unclouded glory through the azure concave....a rich and cultivated valley lay beneath him.... canals in various directions meandered through extensive meadows

and fields clothed with the abundant harvest flocks and herds of cattle were enjoying that calm repose, which for a time had been suspended by the storm. . . . Nature seemed to rest in forgetfulness of the conflict which had troubled her....not a breeze moved the luxuriant foliage.... the chirpings of the grasshopper had ceased the birds were sheltered in silence and the inhabitants securely reposed in cottages neatly constructed, and numerously scattered over this scene of peace and tranquillity. The heart of Hamet felt the soft influence. He forgot his cares, his wants, his forlorn and dejected condition He gazed with ecstasy on the scene before him. "Ah!" sighed he, "this is what delights the heart of man! It is in scenes like these that he can contemplate the great Source of happiness, of wisdom, and of power! What is the gilded palace, what is the banquet of luxury, what are the feverish calls of a sickly and depraved appetite, to an hour like this? These are the pleasures

appropriated

appropriated to man; and when he turns from them he ceases to be one but in form. I thank thee, great and merciful Allah!" cried he in pious enthusiasm, "thou hast awakened my soul from the sleep of death, and I am rich in the ruined condition of my prosperity, which lulled me to stupor on the edge of a precipice." He now pensively followed an easy winding path which conducted him from the mountain into the valley; and he seated himself under some trees till the rising sun and the want of refreshment urged him to proceed. He had not advanced many paces when a turn in his path discovered to him a man sitting under the shade of some lofty palm-trees, and busily engaged in dividing a cake of millet into two equal parts. A turban of white linen was on one side filled with ripe figs: two buffaloes stood quietly browsing beside him, and at his feet lay some implements of husbandry. The composure with which he noticed the approach of Hamet encouraged him to advance. "Give," said

he

he to the peasant with a faint voice, "to him who needeth, for the blessing of Allah! Let not my unworthiness tempt thee to sin. I faint for want of food."—"Take, and be satisfied," answered the man with compassion, and presenting his store. "I have known thy necessities; although, Allah be praised! the vices of Hamet of Bagdad are strangers to me." Hamet confounded hung down his head. "Fear not," continued the man: "thou art safe. Competence and content disdain the price of blood. It is wealth and want that harden the heart of man against his fellow man. Wait here my return," added he, giving him his whole supply of provision: "I go to my daily labour; but at the hour of repose I will conduct thee to my dwelling, where thou shalt find shelter and better fare." He rose to depart. "Thy courtesy emboldens me," said Hamet: "I pray thee, tell me to whom this domain belongs."—"Knowest thou not the merciful Abdallah?" replied the man with an air of surprise. "Behold

on

on that gentle swell on thy right his habitation of peace. Behold the sanctuary of the unfortunate, the asylum of health to the sick, the refuge of the penitent, and the safe repose of the pure of heart! Thou wantest comfort. Seek it there——it will meet thee with kindly greetings." So saying, he hastily pushed on his buffaloes, and departed. Hamet with renewed hope took the road to the habitation thus indicated. The house now met his eyes. Its approach was through a sweep of meadows, bordered by fruit-trees laden with their rich productions. The canal glided in its varied course, and the light boats skimmed on its clear and full stream. On all sides the sportive voices of children cheered his heart: some were sitting in groups on the grass, engaged in their sports, and fantastically adorning their goats with flowers which spontaneously met their hands others were essaying the untaught notes of a flageolet, made of reeds by their own imitative ingenuity Hamet's heart dilated with

sympathetic

sympathetic joy. "These," said he, "are the pleasures of benevolence! these the objects which meet the eye of Abdallah the merciful! In his munificence he finds the *spring of Health*, and in the happiness which he communicates secures his own."

The wide extended though unadorned gate of Abdallah's house admitted the stranger. No slave with insolent menace repelled him; no impertinent curiosity met his wretched appearance; the half naked and tattered Hamet was silently taken by the hand by a slave who attended at the gate to receive the weary guest. Hamet entered: the door of an interior apartment opened, and he found himself in the arms of his unknown physician, and surrounded by the four slaves, the guardians of his infancy. Surprise seized on the spirits of Hamet, and he instantly fainted. His fleeting powers were recalled by the assiduous care of his friends

Hamet once more raised his languid eyes. The bands of sleep were dissolved, and he saw

saw that he was stretched on his accustomed couch, in the rotunda of the pavilion, and supported by Selim. Abdallah, the mysterious Abdallah, was administering, from time to time, a restorative which he held in his hand. Hamet in mute wonder gazed on them all by turns; his troubled senses were yet under the impressions of the vision of the night, and his imagination slowly yielded up the objects impressed on it for those of reality. With a tremulous voice he addressed himself at length to Selim: "Tell me," said he, "thou good old man, where I am: thy master has unworthily forgotten the gratitude which he owed to thy fostering hand; but thou wilt not abuse his present weakness. Thou seest me once more a child, and the child of Misfortune. Wherefore hast thou left the companions of thy flight from Bagdad? Where hast thou left the bark in which the treasures of the cavern were placed? How has it happened that this retreat has either escaped the malice of my enemies, or mocks me with a likeness

to the pavilion? But, above all, I adjure thee, in the name of our Great Prophet, to explain to me (for I believe thou canst), who this stranger is that now so anxiously regards me. Ought I to bow before him as the Angel of Instruction, or as a magician sent to ensnare my soul by a semblance of truth? for I have been subdued by his power, and I may be the victim of his artifices."—"Child indeed, O Hamet, must thou be," answered Selim with untroubled countenance, "if for a moment thou returnest to the tales of thy nursery. Thy present weakness clouds thy reason, which has long since refuted the magician, and the idle phantoms of ignorance and childish credulity. Oh, son of my love! embrace thy deliverer; for he hath saved thy soul from destruction, and thy life from the malice of thy foes. In *his* venerable form acknowledge the living representative of thy grandfather Abenmuley's virtue; and bow with filial duty before thine uncle, and *more than father*." The subdued Hamet sunk into the embrace of his preserver, and his

his heart was relieved of an insupportable weight. The visions of the night still floated on his fancy, and he recounted the eventful tale to his friends. They hung with mute attention round his couch, and, when Hamet had finished, Abdallah thus spoke: "Heaven, my son, hath been graciously pleased to second my pious purposes. The instruction of this night standeth not in need of my authority to enforce it on thy heart. Thou hast found the *Spring of Health.* Thou knowest the road to Happiness. Thou hast experienced the false and deceitful pleasures of thy palace at Bagdad. The recital of my life will elucidate all the mysteries which now cloud thy returning peace Allah!" cried he with pious fervour, "be thou still propitious to thy servant! May the words of my lips purify and establish Hamet! May he learn, that thou never forsakest him who doth not depart from thee!"

CONTINUATION OF HAMET.

"THOU knowest, without doubt, my son," began Abdallah, "the celebrity of thy grandfather Abenmuley's fame; for his name is still held in reverence by the good; and the poor and needy still bless their benefactor, by wishing him the recompense of the happy Abenmuley.

"Thy father and myself were the only remains of a numerous offspring: the pestilence like a deluge swept away the children of the pious Abenmuley, and we were preserved from its desolating fury by being with our mother at a house distant from Bagdad, at the time when the plague broke out. Zelima, our mother, was the most beloved wife of our father. The death of all his other children, and the same fate which had severed from him the greater part of his household, determined him to seek happiness with his Zelima in her favourite retreat. Abenmuley was at this period in his sixtieth year. He gave up his splendid establishment

establishment at Bagdad, and in the bosom of his family enjoyed, for two years, a felicity which can only spring from undivided affection and controlled passions. The death of our mother interrupted his serenity, and again called upon him for pious resignation. Achmet, my brother, had at this juncture reached his sixteenth year. I was two years younger. A maternal uncle, who had a brilliant fortune in a distant province, at this time quitted for a season his government to undertake an embassy which regarded it; and he found our father bending under his recent loss and a profound dejection of spirits. His health had yielded to his sorrow, and Abenmuley was the shadow of his former self. Achmet, our uncle, knew little of the soothing and lenient remedies which sympathy applies to affliction. He augmented the sorrows of Abenmuley by seducing his son from his arms. My brother, in defiance of a father's tears, followed the fortune of his uncle, in whose aspiring ambition he found a basis for his own; and he quitted the paternal

ternal roof with exulting hope and cold indifference.

"Amongst the domestic slaves of our habitation were four, who shared without jealousy the particular favour of my father. They were Greeks by birth, and a long friendship had united them. Selim and Heli are, as thou knowest, brethren, and they became the slaves of thy grandfather some time before Mustapha and his companion entered into the gentle servitude of Abenmuley. At the prayer of Selim and his brother, my father purchased them from a master hard and ferocious, and they experienced, in the change of their fetters, that goodness can render captivity an easy yoke. These men brought with them a rich recompense. Their knowledge and talents afforded to the sons of their benevolent patron advantages that his wealth could not have purchased. We had been instructed by Selim and his brother in all the higher branches of science, and in the accession of Mustapha and his friend we found the means of acquiring those accomplishments

plishments so little known to the Turks. My brother's impetuous spirit loved neither the wisdom of the former nor the graces of the latter of our tutors; and to be freed from their restraint was probably amongst the more powerful motives which urged his departure. Be this as it may, it is certain that a taste for letters was the predominant one in my mind; and my attachment to these men amounted to a veneration which imposed on me a respect that their years did not demand; for they were then, like myself, in the spring of life, although somewhat more advanced.

"My father, in the absence of Achmet, sought to renew his comforts with a child, who, in *his* love and fond remembrance, bore the image of his Zelima in his countenance. Delighted with pursuits which removed far from him the fear of losing sight of me, he with cheerfulness sought every means of promoting them. Manuscripts were procured, at an expense and labour proportioned to the difficulty of finding them; and the most distant regions supplied

food

food for the mind of Abdallah. In this course of improvement, in social ease and reciprocal confidence, did my peaceful days glide on, till I had reached my twentieth year. My father's health and happiness were renewed, and my friends apparently forgot that captivity was an evil. This I was however determined to remind my father it became him to recollect. I knew my brother: and I also knew the power which would eventually fall into his hands. My father's countenance took an air of tender sorrow on my gently urging this obligation to him He was silent, and evidently moved. 'I will be just,' said he. 'Thy friends are *free,* from this hour. To thy generous care, my son, I leave the unlimited power to render that freedom a blessing to them Go, and confer with them on those measures which are necessary, and speak not of the sorrow of Abenmuley.' His voice faltered, and he retired into the alley of the garden nearest to him. With collected firmness I opened my commission to my friends; and, concealing my face

face in my robe, waited with a throbbing heart their answer. They with one voice refused the offered gift, on every condition save that of being left my unalienable right at the decease of my father. 'Banish us not,' said they, 'from this abode of peace. We are the *children* of the merciful Abenmuley; and we seek no other refuge.' Transported with joy at a decision so favourable to our wishes, my father and myself forgot those necessary measures of security in which the future condition of our friends was involved. Abenmuley was in health, and we gave ourselves up to uncertain contingencies.

"Selim, in his office of superintendant of the gardens, discovered a fraudulent trick of a young Egyptian slave, to whom he had taken a fancy, and for whom he had an affection. The offence was repeated, and falsehood employed to cover it. Hassen well knew the penalty: it consisted neither in scourging nor in hard fare, but in an exchange of master; and he perfectly understood

stood that no punishment could be so severe. He besought the pity of Selim, and with ingenuous contrition threw himself on his mercy. Selim knew the heart of man. He supplied the culprit with the deficient sum, and gave him a post still more honourable in the apartment of his master; and thus fixed a principle of integrity and gratitude in the young heart of Hassen, which has manifested itself above seduction from that hour. Abenmuley insensibly became partial to the services of a man whose hilarity and affectionate cares pleased him. The infirmities of age silently gained on his strength, and Hassen's watchful eye prevented his weakness. His constant cheerfulness, the simplicity of his mind, and his active ingenuity, won on us all; and the gay and docile Hassen was the favourite of the family.

"The anniversary of my father's birthday approached, and Hassen's fertile mind suggested a new amusement for his beloved master: he communicated his plan to us, and

and received from us, with ecstasy, full powers to regulate the festival at his will. The busy Hassen gave to all their destined parts, and a dance in the fashion of his country was amongst the proposed pleasures.

" Abenmuley usually retired in the evening to a small mosque, which he had caused to be erected for his own use, in a distant and retired part of the garden, and on the evening prior to his birth-day he was conducted at sunset to his devotions. It was customary with Hassen to wait his master's signal of a small bell, at some little distance, in order to reconduct him to the house. But no sooner had he placed Abenmuley on the sofa, than with the speed of a bird he flew to a distant part of the spacious grounds, in order to practise the dance with his comrades. The animated and loquacious Hassen was not however unmindful of the fleeting minutes; and he hastened with prompt obedience to the post which he had quitted. In his way he was accosted by

two

two of his principal associates in his plans of amusement for the following morning; and still having his orders to enforce, he desired them to follow him to the mosque, and to wait there till he had conducted his master to the house. They obeyed, and reached the mosque at the same instant with him. Hassen, anxious to know whether his absence had been noticed, and sensible that the usual time for the summons had elapsed, cautiously approached the door, which he had left open on account of the heat: a piercing cry followed, and the two other slaves rushed in. Extended on the sofa was the breathless body of the good Abenmuley, serenely smiling in death. The trembling slaves, with gentle care and unfeigned tears, conveyed him to the house, where Selim exhausted the powers of his art in vainly endeavouring to recall from its blessed abode the soul of Abenmuley. I was saved from despair by my friends; but the spirit which animated me was fled. I mourned my father, and tasted no joy beyond

beyond that of meeting the face of sorrow in the countenance of every one around me. In my solitary walks the slave mournfully murmured, as he respectfully retired, the name of Abenmuley, and blessed me. My swelling heart received the benediction, and returned it; for what, O Hamet! does the heart of man whisper at the sight of man? Does it not say, Behold thy likeness, thy equal, and thy brother?.... The return of thy father brought me no joy: he was accompanied by only two slaves, and these, as I accidentally learned, had been purchased for the express purpose of his journey. He appeared to enjoy a malignant satisfaction, in having surprised me by the celerity of his return after the death of our parent. His air was gloomy and ferocious; he spoke in parables, and questioned with suspicious exactness. The whole arrangement of the house was changed. My friends were sent to work in a plantation remote from the habitation in which they had lived exempted from toil. I was given

given to understand that my father had made no provision for me, and that I was eating the bread of dependence. My spirit felt the degradation, and I haughtily announced my purpose of freeing my brother from the unwelcome burthen. With a frown and taunting air he bade me first prepare to answer to the inquiries respecting the death of my father.... 'and for this purpose,' added he, 'know that you are a *prisoner here*.' Confounded, but not dismayed, I determined to remain and brave his malice. I was watched in all my movements; and, to my surprise and indignation, Hassen appeared the most vigilant of my spies. He had retained his post in the house, and enjoyed the favour of Achmet.

"One evening I was, as usual, weeping in the mosque of my father. The door was open, and a man in his flight threw in a slip of paper. I hastily caught it, and read in the Greek language, and in Selim's characters, the word '*Follow*.' I darted after the flying steps of the slave before me, whom

whom with astonishment I perceived to be Hassen. On a sudden he threw, with admirable agility, a stone over the high wall, and as instantly this signal was answered by a ladder of ropes which fell down. Hassen turned to it, pointed, and continued his hasty steps. I mounted, and was received into the arms of Selim, on the outer side of the garden. 'Thou art safe,' said he with joyful emotion: 'thy sanctuary is at hand:' ... and pressing forward, he led me in a short time to the cavern, in which is still concealed thy father's treasure. Here Selim fell on my neck, and with impassioned grief exclaimed, 'I must leave thee, my beloved son! I must quit thee, Abdallah: the life of my brother, of all thy friends, hangs on the present moment. I have scarcely time to tell thee, that thou owest thy preservation to Hassen. This night thou wouldest have been strangled by the order of Achmet. The oldest of the slaves who journeyed with him hither, that Zanga so favoured by thy brother, discovered in Hassen

Hassen a long lost son; and he communicated to him the perfidious purpose of a master whom he hates and fears, against the life of his child's generous and gentle patron. In the silence and dead of the night the faithful Hassen stood before me, covered with dust, and panting with haste. 'Save Abdallah!' said he, 'and thy soul shall live, and mine will bless thee!' He unfolded to me the dark designs of thy envious brother, and we concerted the means of thy deliverance. Some years since, in seeking medicinal herbs, I discovered this subterraneous retreat; and at the moment saw its value. The project of effecting by its means my escape from captivity was seriously considered; but the gentleness of Abenmuley, and my brother's weak health, suppressed my wish of freedom, and I dropped the design. It instantly occurred to me, that it would afford thee an asylum, and I have prepared it as well as the intervening time would allow. There are mats for thy repose, and water

and

and cakes for thy sustenance.... Abide here as long as possible, for thou wilt be pursued with disappointed rage.'—He pressed me to his breast.... 'Take,' said he, 'the united wealth of thy slaves and friends.... they now bless the servitude which has enabled them to be useful to thee.'..Thus saying, he conducted me through various caverns to the outlet, which is distant from thy pavilion, and less difficult of access than the one by which we had entered, and which without the ladder of ropes we could not have effected.... I remained some days in my secret abode, and at length reached Mousel in safety. My fortune, O my son, hath since that eventful period been varied; but in the hard lessons of adversity my soul established herself, and felt the protecting hand of Allah. At Aleppo I became the property of a master celebrated for his knowledge in the art of healing. He discovered that I was not ignorant. Our common studies united us; and he led me from theory to practice.

He was old and childless, and he formally adopted me as his son. Some years after he died blessing me, and I took peaceable possession of his papers, and the small house and garden in which we had so amicably resided together. The riches of Mulah followed him; for these consisted in good works. One day, as I passed by the slave market, an impulse of curiosity led me to examine some of those who were exposed for purchase; and a circumstance of my youthful days led me to recognise Hassen, under the dejected form of sorrow and added years of misery. I had in heedless sport marked on his breast, with a chymical preparation, his name in Greek letters, and time had not effaced them. Blessing Allah for this gracious interposition, with trembling impatience I purchased my deliverer, and, conducting him home, gave a loose to my honest joy.... Hassen, after the first agitations had subsided, informed me that my escape had not implicated my friends in the suspicious mind of Achmet. He concluded

that I had overheard him talking to Zanga, and that, mistrusting the subject of the conference, I had escaped without other aid than my own address. An order from the Divan to repair immediately to the frontiers, to take upon him a government which he had for some time solicited, diverted his fury and interrupted his meditated pursuit of me. No longer jealous of my influence, he recalled to their several stations men who he had prudence sufficient to know would serve him with integrity; and Selim and his friends were the guardians of his house and property in his absence. 'But,' added Hassen, 'my unhappy father had been intrusted with a secret too important to be left behind. He followed his master, under whose harsh authority he sunk to the grave, leaving me secretly to deplore his loss. At the expiration of a few years, Achmet returned to Bagdad laden with riches, and the execrations of an oppressed people.'

"I learned also, from the faithful Hassen,

that I had in thee, my son, a renewed hope, and the desire of beholding thy face preyed on my heart. Hassen constantly opposed my wishes; he spoke of the increasing power and obduracy of Achmet; of danger to my friends.... and the useless sacrifice of my own life. He had escaped from the power of Achmet, and he was troubled by the most remote hazard of encountering his resentment. My inclination yielded to my regard for his safety and peace of mind. Year succeeded year; till an illness reminded me that my dust would not rest with the sacred remains of Abenmuley: I became dejected; and Hassen discovering the cause, urged me with zeal to undertake the voyage.... My health and my youth were renovated by hope. I reached Bagdad in safety; I saw and wept over thy blooming face; I pressed to my heart the son of Achmet, and the renewed image of Abenmuley. Thy sleep was the repose of health and innocence; and I implored of Allah to continue to thee these blessings. I

saw

saw the drooping Achmet; and my friends gave me the history of his fortune and apprehensions. He returned to his post, and left not only thee to their faithful trust, but also those anxious fears which haunted his repose.... He had been coldly received by the Sultan; he had discovered that the Divan was filled by those who envied and hated him; he regarded the continuation of his lucrative station as a *snare* placed the more effectually to ruin him.... The wise Selim became the confident of the haughty Achmet; for the virtuous, my son, are sought in the hour of difficulty by those who, in the tide of prosperous fortune, insult them. Selim trembled for thy safety; and he prepared for it, by communicating to his master the secret of the caverns. But, wise from experience, he said nothing of the outlet on the opposite side of the mountain. He knew Achmet.——The plan for building on this spot was adopted; and Selim and his friends were left with unconditional powers by Achmet. With unabating

ing industry and toil did they, with their own hands, form the different passages to the recess, and with secret labour convey the riches of Achmet to their destined place of concealment. With assiduous care did they contrive the secret avenues to thy apartment; and Heli, with a well-grounded diffidence, constructed the walls of several of the apartments after the manner of those of a ruined temple he had seen in Greece, and which, without doubt, had been the contrivance of those who lived on the credulity of its worshippers. This circular apartment admits within its partitions the ear distinctly to catch every word that is spoken in the room; and Heli and his friends have at this hour reason to bless the ingenuity with which they succeeded. At Achmet's return the pavilion was finished; and, on the plea of declining health, Achmet retired from his employments, and lived in solitary grandeur.—But his safety was neither in the pavilion nor in his cautious prudence—the hand of the injured Abdallah

held

held him up; and Hamet was the shield of his father. Under my assumed name and character, the occasions of being useful to my fellow creatures multiplied, and my reputation for skill in my profession increased daily. Obscure in my modes of life, unambitious of wealth, I sought not the fortune which met me. I was summoned in haste one day to the palace of the beautiful Zobeide, the favourite wife of our great master, and the reigning Sultana. The art of her attending physicians had been confounded by a malady which threatened her life, and in the portentous hour of danger and despair the Sultan listened to a female slave belonging to Zobeide, who spoke of a stranger that had saved the life of her mother, and whose skill in medicine was wonderful.

"The Sultan eagerly caught at this gleam of hope. I bowed before him. 'Save Zobeide,' cried he with frantic grief.... 'save her! and share my diadem.'—I found my patient stretched on a sofa, her beauteous face horribly

horribly disfigured, her head swollen to an extraordinary size, her eyes closed as in death, and panting amidst a crowd of weeping attendants and the suffocating fumes of incense and perfumes. In the adjoining apartment sat the Sultan, brooding over suspicions which distracted him... I approached him—'There has been perfidy!' exclaimed he with fury—'thy life hangs on this moment!—she has swallowed poison!'—'The life of thy slave,' said I, prostrating myself, 'is in thy hands; but the life of Zobeide depends on my unconditional power to command in her apartment.'—'Go,' cried he impatiently; 'go, and be absolute.'—I dismissed the useless crowd, and, opening the lattices, examined the almost insensible Zobeide. My first opinion was confirmed, and I found the malady to be an erysipelas, which, when understood, is rarely mortal. My conjectures were soon realized: in a few days the Sultana was declared out of danger, and public rejoicings followed public anxiety... But Zobeide rejoiced not,

not. She reproached me for saving her life; and bewailed the loss of her beauty with unceasing lamentations . . . 'I have,' said I, 'once pledged my life on thy recovery: I now renew this engagement. Zobeide in a short time shall again be more fair than the daughters of Paradise . . . I go to prepare thee a beautifying lotion. Its success depends on thy obedience; no *other* must be applied.' The docile Sultana promised, and fountain water effected the wonder.

"The gratitude of Zobeide was as unbounded as her joy. She loaded me with her munificence, and still thought she did too little. I presented myself before her one morning at the usual hour, an embroidered purse filled with zechins in my hand: it was the daily offering of the generous Zobeide. 'Thy gold,' said I, with a confidence that she had encouraged, 'doth not satisfy me . . . I have more than I need . . . and Allah hath recompensed my cares in thy recovery. Abdallah must owe his future felicity to Zobeide, or descend to the

grave *a mourner.*' . . . 'Speak,' cried she, placing her hand across her throat: 'thus shall it be with Zobeide, if, having the power, she do not satisfy Abdallah!'—'I ask,' replied I, 'the life of Achmet of Bagdad, and of his son Hamet.' The following day she gave me, with the Sultan's signet, the order which would have consigned thee, O Hamet! and thy father to the grave; and the full possession of thy wealth was formally secured to thy apparent executioner. 'Thou hast prevented a host of this Achmet's foes,' said the Sultana: 'his death has been determined upon in the Divan for some time; but the Sultan remembered, with kindness, the services of his father whilst he was himself an infant in the cradle. But the rapine and extortion of Achmet have cancelled from the memory of our master the claims which thy father's fidelity had on his favour; and the cries of an incensed people, and the envy of those who wished to rise on his ruin, had prevailed. Thy services, Abdallah, have saved him.

His

His life or his death is in thy hands.'.... Struck by the sense of the impending danger to thee as well as thy father, I fell on my face and adored the merciful interposition of Allah . . . and I wept aloud. Zobeide, surprised at my emotion, asked me to explain the cause. I recounted to her patient ear the history of my life.... 'Hast thou done wisely, Abdallah,' said she when I had finished, 'to hazard a life so precious as thine to the machinations of such a brother as Achmet?—But let him beware! Zobeide will recompense with interest his future malice, if thou still permit him to live.'...'Alas!' replied I, 'justice now pursueth the troubled and feeble Achmet. His soul trembleth at the shaking leaf, and he is hastening to a grave which will not screen him from the Judge he must meet.'

"The Sultana soon after appointed me her physician and that of her two sons apartments in the palace were assigned to me; and in this honourable post I continue to

please

please and serve the generous Zobeide, and to share the confidence of my great master. The death of thy father soon followed my prediction of its approach. Thy mad folly succeeded, and I mourned as one without hope. Thy enfeebled health suggested to my friends one effort to save thee. Thou knowest the means which we have pursued . . . and wilt no longer be doubtful in regard to events, which as they happened surprised thee. My escape from thy apartment was favoured by my confederates, during the search of thy slaves after the *magician*. I was in the habit of one, concealed in Heli's hut. Thy removal hither had for its object my first cares, namely, thy restoration, which I perceived depended solely on air, abstinence, and seclusion from thy tumultuous guests Heli, who was thy invisible attendant, bethought him of profiting from the construction of thy prison to effect his design; and Selim, knowing how sensibly thy imagination would meet the marvellous, encouraged it.

it. The elixir which thou wast ordered to swallow was only a different preparation of thy accustomed opium, which acted the more powerfully for thy recent disuse of it. I am not surprised that thy dreams should be tinctured with the doubts of thy waking hours, or rendered more impressive by the calm serenity of thy spirits, and the temperance of thy late diet; but I presume not, O Hamet! to scan the purposes of the Most High. Thy vision may, if thou be wise, serve thee as the road to happiness, and thou wilt neither be weak nor impious by referring its instructions to that Providence which watcheth over thee. Thy understanding is now enlightened; thy heart is prepared: return to the world, and act thy allotted part with honour. It is needful that thou shouldst submit thyself to one act of my authority. The men before thee are *free*. They are the friends and brethren of Abdallah. Fare thee well! We go to enjoy in repose the fruits of a well-spent life. May the fame of thy virtues be a sun to gild our declining days!"

"Oh!

"Oh! leave me not," cried Hamet in the agony of tender grief—"leave me not to my unpractised feet. Finish your work of mercy, dear and respectable friends of the lost Hamet!—Hide not thy face from me," cried he, embracing with fervour Abdallah's knees—"Oh! establish me in those paths of peace that thou hast so securely trodden. Leave me not! but, with thy last breath, transfuse into my soul thy virtues!"—"I yield," said the delighted Abdallah. "The blessing of Allah will still support the hope of the good! Abenmuley shall again live to dispense comfort to those who sorrow, and to feed with bread him who fainteth by the way. Hamet will emulate his piety and benevolence; and Abdallah will close his eyes with joy."

The son of Achmet was forgotten in the descendant of Abenmuley; the treasures of the cavern became the fund of the necessitous; and the prosperity of Hamet was without envy, because, like the dew of heaven, it was a blessing to all.

Letter XIII.

THE SISTERS,

OR THE

PROGRESS OF ENVY.

You know, my dear Eliza, the unequal contest which I have had lately to sustain, in opposition to you and your two formidable auxiliaries, Mrs. Beaumont and Dr. Mansfield. I have most heroically inlisted under the banners of common sense and daily experience, and endeavoured to maintain that the judgement which determines the human character from the conformation of the countenance is fallacious, and the confidence it begets dangerous; for, although I am willing to allow Lavater to have been a man of great observation and acute penetration, I would not have trusted my honour, my happiness, or my fortune, to the hazard of those rules which he has so enthusiastically

enthusiastically laid down as the unerring elements of the most difficult of all human sciences, namely, the knowledge of the human heart.

Your grandfather, whom, by common consent, we named umpire in this our debate, has not, I suspect, acted by me with his usual impartialt y. His decision amounts only to that of sir Roger de Coverley; and I am not altogether satisfied with his "Much may be said on both sides of the question." I aim at conquest, at a complete victory over Fancy and Delusion, and a drawn battle will not suffice me.

I also suspect that you, my Eliza, employ some charm to beguile him of his honesty; for I observe, that when his eyes are riveted on your face, my powers of reasoning are not attended to. *This* is not fair play.

A few evenings since, you were so elated by what you imagined an advantage gained over me, that, in the gaiety and triumph of your spirits, you followed me into my dressing-room on the party separating for the night,

night, and, with much exultation, you drew a chair, and asked me whether Dr. Mansfield had not completely foiled me. "No," replied I, laughing at your eagerness, "very far from it, for his face is an incontrovertible proof of my arguments. Who, I pray you, amongst the most profound and most acute physiognomists, would be able to discover Dr. Mansfield's real character by the rules of their art? Would they expect to find, under that crushed forehead, those beetle brows, and that heavy, projecting lip, a benevolence which has every human being for its object, and an understanding which has reached with ease the highest pitch of human attainments? I know not what qualities of mind you learned disciples of Lavater would affix to his singular and grotesque countenance; but I suspect shrewdly, that, on first encountering it, the most polite stranger would be tempted to stare and to smile." "They would, by so doing," answered you eagerly, "give me the strongest evidence of their own want of penetration; for the very singularity

of

of his face marks a character of mind to be reverenced; and discernment would instantly pronounce Dr. Mansfield's what it is. However, it must be confessed," continued you very dexterously, "that you have, my dear mother, omitted his eyes in the enumeration of his defective features; but can you deny that these are invitations to every child of Sorrow and Want, and the index to a heart and an understanding of superior excellence?"

Whilst this effusion of esteem and gratitude was passing your lips, my attention was attracted by a face, which converted, for the time, my incredulity in the art of physiognomy. Your father's spirit animated it. The same open candour was seated on your brow, the same smile dimpled your cheek, and spoke the gratified feelings of love and veneration for a man who has, from your infancy, been useful to you. I was subdued, my child. You saw my emotion, received with pensiveness my blessing, and quitted me with reluctant steps. But my child

knows

knows that from such moments of weakness her mother has derived strength.

I have from that time left your favourites to their triumph. Last Monday evening, at lady Gouldthorpe's party, I directed your attention to a young lady of distinguished beauty and elegance, who was seated near us, and who appeared, like ourselves, to be merely a spectator of the card-tables. I desired you to examine her face minutely, and to give the same hint to your friends Mrs. Beaumont and Dr. Mansfield. You did not forget my injunction; for the symmetry and loveliness of it had attracted your notice, and I observed that neither of your friends was unmindful of my orders.

On our return home I asked you and your *Oracles* the result of your examination. You were none of you unprepared for my question. Dr. Mansfield boldly pronounced that he had perceived in the elevation of miss Saville's beautiful eye-brows a fretful peevish temper. Mrs Beaumont contended that these rather indicated a supercilious pride

pride and a cold heart. You as warmly urged that she exhibited the most gentle traits of mind and temper, with a beauty, in your opinion, irresistible; and you finished by asserting that she was one "that would be sinned against rather than sin."—Your grandfather, who had listened to this conversation in silence, now smiled, and with some archness of manner warned you to be on your guard, reminding you that I was preparing a snare for you, and that you well knew I was a Circe in my way. You laughed, and said you had no fear of snares that could never betray, and you continued to listen to several very scientific observations which the doctor, with the utmost gravity, produced for your further information in the art of physiognomy.

The history of miss Amelia Saville will best evince my purpose, and establish your grandfather's sagacity, who, contented with the knowledge he has of my aims and objects in this world, as these relate to your safety, saw, without studying my face, that

I had

I had some design by renewing a subject which had been already discussed and dismissed.

The mother of this beautiful creature, the lady who sat next her, is a widow of large and independent fortune. The heroine of my tale was about five years old when her father died, and she has a sister about a year older than herself.

Nature had not been less liberal in her gifts to Sophia, the eldest of these girls, than to Amelia, whose charms you have so justly admired; and although their persons and dispositions had little resemblance, they both promised to realize the hopes of their respectable connections. An unfortunate predilection in favour of Amelia had been indulged without check or consideration by her fond mother even before the death of Mr. Saville; and in the indulgence of a weak and unjust partiality originated those evils which have menaced the sisters with destruction, and broken asunder those ties of Nature which so essentially contribute to the

happiness

happiness and security of this life. The relations and friends of the family had perceived Amelia's ascendency in her mother's heart, and had witnessed the power she usurped over the more timid and delicate Sophia. They censured her conduct, but forgot, in their zeal for justice, the errors which betrayed themselves into a conduct as pernicious as that which so much offended them. They became partial in their turn, and Sophia was the declared object of their praises and caresses. This opposition to Mrs. Saville's opinion only augmented her tenderness for a child "to whom no one was kind but herself;" and satisfied with having so ostensible a plea wherewith to colour her weakness, she daily became more fond of her idol, and more indifferent to Sophia. It is needless for me to remark on the probability of these children discovering the benefits which spring from love and mutual good offices, had they been left to the experience which must have resulted from more mature reason, and the common

advantages

advantages arising from their mutual dependence on each other. But the continual contests for favour produced very different effects, and such as must ever be produced in the minds of beings left to the suggestions and stimulus of self-interest. Sophia, naturally delicate in constitution, was however gentle and timid. She shrunk from a competition which harassed and rendered her fretful. She became pensive and pale, and carefully shunned those whose pity and kindness cost her the rebukes of her mother, and produced the resentment of her tyrant. Amongst the number of Sophia's *partisans*, if I may apply the word to the present subject, was a Mr. Goldby. He was uncle to Mr. Saville, and considered as the future friend of his children. His integrity was unimpeached, and his manners in some respects as unbending as his rectitude. He had, some time before his nephew's death, retired from a very lucrative and successful commerce, which he had conducted for many years in Lisbon; and his settling in England

England was a circumstance of general satisfaction to his friends. His attachment to Mr. Saville and the little girls was, from a man of his temper, understood as an avowed intention of considering them as the future heirs of his ample fortune; for every one knew that he was incapable of crushing those expectations which with reason resulted from his conduct.

On the event which hurried Mr. Saville to an untimely grave, not a shadow of doubt was entertained but that his children were left to the guardianship of their good uncle. Mr. Goldby, impressed by the same idea, attended to the opening of the deceased gentleman's will, and found, to his surprise, that he had bequeathed his whole fortune to his wife, and that the children were left to her unconditional will for the future provision which his fortune might have amply secured.

The uncle was no less offended than surprised by a proof so conclusive, as he judged, of the undue influence of Mrs. Saville: and,

frank

frank and unceremonious by habit, he with some asperity of manner told the widow that she would do well to bear constantly in mind that her husband had left not only his fortune, but his good name, to her management. "Take heed," added he sternly, "that you do not give strength to the opinion which experience has already established, that a man must be either a fool or a knave who leaves his children to the mercy of a woman."

Mrs. Saville's rising colour indicated her resentment of this freedom; but the considerations of prudence checked her emotions of anger; and with tears she assured him that it would be her constant endeavour to show that her husband had not forgotten his children in making their mother their steward and guardian: as a proof of her intention, she implored his advice and assistance in the exigences of the hour, adding, that she firmly resolved to be guided by him in every subsequent measure in which the interest of her children was concerned. Softened by a

moderation which he did not expect, the worthy old man entered into the business of the executorship with zeal, and finished the arrangements of his nephew's affairs with much advantage to his widow. Mrs. Saville was not insensible to these acts of kindness, nor forgetful that Mr. Goldby had a fortune of forty thousand pounds to leave behind him at his death. His authority in her house was however exercised solely with a view to the happiness of the family. He had been powerfully attracted to Sophia from being the frequent witness of the petulance and hasty temper of Amelia: but he was too just to blame the child for the weakness of her mother; and, with an impartiality which ought to have corrected the errors not only of that mother but of the friends around her, he reproved or encouraged them with wisdom and gentleness as they merited Discord and rivalship had, however, their throne in the nursery, and years had established their empire. Sophia became sickly and peevish, Amelia tyrannical and pert.

pert. In this manner they reached their eleventh and twelfth years; when one day Mrs. Saville seriously consulted Mr. Goldby on the expediency of placing Sophia in a boarding-school, in order to correct her temper, and check the growing habits of indolence; acknowledging that, being averse to severity, she could not permit miss Green, their private governess, to use such discipline as she insisted was the only means from which she looked for reformation or improvement in her pupil. Mr. Goldby, who had with compassion seen in this poor child nothing more than the effects of repressed spirits and weak health, concealed his feelings when this proposal was placed before him. He only gravely remarked, that Mrs. Saville could not be a stranger to his preference of a domestic education for girls who had mothers to superintend in the direction of them; that he was going for the warm months to his retreat at Springwood; and that he would take Sophia with him, trusting to the effects of good air and

exercise for her cure. The mother cheerfully consented to a measure which ensured her an exemption from the endless cares of keeping her favourite in good humour, and her sister from indulgences which she thought hurtful to her.

The happy Sophia was immediately conveyed by her uncle to his house near Rochester, and placed under the care of his housekeeper, a good and intelligent woman, who had as a parent gained sufficient experience for the proper regulation of the young patient's diet. Freedom and tranquillity seconded these measures; health returned with contentment; and the fretful complaining Sophia was pronounced by Mrs. Nuttley to have "the temper of a dove and the sportiveness of a lamb." It is true, Sophia forgot in the morning rambles with her uncle the two hours' lesson at the piano which had been enjoined by miss Green the governess. The collar and the feet-stocks had been left at her uncle's town house, and no one thought of them: not a single attempt

attempt had been made to copy the drawings her governess had provided for her leisure hours: but Sophia had sketched dozens of landscapes from the scenery around her, which had pleased Mrs. Nuttley, though they could not satisfy herself: and as for needle-work or books, these were rarely thought of; for Mr. Goldby was making her a parterre, and chose she should be at his side to help him, and to chat. November reunited the family: the sunburnt healthy Sophia was welcomed by her friends with wonder and delight, and received by her mother and miss Green as a neglected scholar and a spoiled child. Diligence in recovering her *lost time* was injudiciously enforced: the acknowledged superiority of Amelia in her music and French did not suffice; Sophia was taunted and teased by her tormentor for having cunningly made herself a favourite with Mr. Goldby, and upbraided as a telltale. Again did the temper of the dove and the playfulness of the lamb disappear. An obstinate cough succeeded,

succeeded, with symptoms of an alarming kind, and in the following summer poor Sophia was judged to be in a consumption. About this time an event took place, to which it is probable she was indebted for her life, and, without any doubt may it be said, to which she was indebted for her happiness and improvement as a rational being. Mr. Goldby had, during his residence in Lisbon, lived on terms of the strictest intimacy with his partner in business. This gentleman was a native of Geneva, and had married an English lady who resided with her parents in the country near him, in that retirement which agreed with the mediocrity of their fortune. The death of these parents left the young and beautiful daughter without any other provision than that which resulted from monsieur Granger's affection, who, notwithstanding he had yet his fortune to make, married her in a short time after she became an orphan. Mr. Goldby's agency, in the hands of Providence, conducted monsieur Granger not only to

Lisbon

Lisbon but to affluence; and, when he died, his widow was left at her ease in pecuniary matters. The tried friend and prop of Granger's life became a suitor for the hand of madame Granger. She refused his offer, but retained his heart; and he quitted Portugal some few years after, with an opinion which time had justified, that few could contend with madame Granger on the score of merit and talents.

An unexpected and considerable legacy from a remote branch of her mother's family summoned madame Granger to England, and she found her friend Mr. Goldby at his house at Springwood under the utmost anxiety for the fate of poor Sophia. It was not difficult to perceive, on the one hand, the interest which he took in this child's preservation, and on the other, his opinion of those measures her mother had adopted, and which he pronounced had been, and would be, the destruction of the child. Happy to be useful to the object of her gratitude and veneration, madame Gran-

ger

ger eagerly proposed to him Sophia's returning home with her, and talked in the most encouraging terms of the salubrity of the air and situation of her house, which was placed on a spot peculiarly beneficial to the invalid, and to her "a paradise." This plan was referred to Mrs. Saville, with a peremptory assertion on the part of Mr. Goldby, that he was of opinion nothing could save the girl's life but the experiment proposed. Mrs. Saville consented to Sophia's removal, and early in September the travellers set out for Falmouth, under the escort of Mr. Goldby and Mrs. Nuttley, who after two months' residence in madame Granger's "paradise" returned to England.

The voyage, though tedious, had been salutary to the invalid, and the physicians had a reasonable ground for hope, by finding the hectic symptoms lessening every day. Her youth and madame Granger's vigilance assisted their prescriptions, and in a year Sophia was again recovered to comparative health. From this time madame Granger had

had a recompense for which she had made no calculations. Sophia's improvements constituted her first enjoyments; and in the consciousness of having formed her to be an object for general praise and esteem, she forgot for a time the uncertain tenure by which she retained the pride and comfort of her own existence. Collecting around her the best and most cultivated society, she facilitated to her pupil the knowledge and use of every polite language, and saw with maternal delight the slender and delicate girl gradually exhibiting all the graces of youth and health, with the modesty and sweetness of a meek and feminine temper and a well informed understanding.

Mr. Goldby's interference had been more useful to madame Granger than the reports which reached England by means of those who had seen Sophia during their search for health. Madame Granger's pupil was the elaborate theme of praise and admiration of the returned travellers, who conceived that they could not more effectually please Mrs.

Saville, or better gratify the curiosity of the sister, than by descanting on this subject. The mother thought the girl's head would be turned, by seeing the whole *corps diplomatique* bowing and complimenting around her; and that a girl of sixteen had something better to do than to figure in a circle every evening. Mr. Goldby maintained that such circles as madame Granger's were, under her guidance, the best paths to wisdom and discretion; and that if Sophia were recalled she would be dead in a year. More was included in this prediction than met the ear. The mother understood him; for she perfectly knew that Amelia had not forgotten "the art of tormenting."

She was aware that Amelia already dreaded the return of a sister to precede her in the notice of the world; and she quietly permitted madame Granger to enjoy a blessing which she well knew she should not find to be one under her own roof. But when this "charming daughter" approached her eighteenth year, and Mrs. Saville heard every one

one asking her, with expressions of surprise, "how she contrived to live without so sweet a girl!" she thought it time to renew her claims to the maternal character; and she peremptorily gave Mr. Goldby to understand, that she could not be satisfied with an absence so uselessly procrastinated. He engaged to be in Lisbon for the purpose of restoring to her the "long-banished Sophia:" and he kept his promise; for early in the autumn he was an inmate with madame Granger: and the preparations for Sophia's return and madame Granger's visit to Mrs. Saville were in forwardness, when Sophia was attacked by the measles, and was for some days extremely ill. Her medical friend perceived at once all the consequences likely to result to a patient so delicate as Sophia, from a change to a climate so obviously unfriendly to the cough which is incident to this malady. He cautioned Mr. Goldby on the subject; who without loss of time transmitted to her mother the cause of their delay, and his resolution of passing the winter with his

his Lisbon friends. Mrs. Saville consoled herself under this disappointment, by introducing into society her beautiful and accomplished Amelia, who had then attained her seventeenth year, and whose pretensions to general admiration and favour none were disposed to dispute.

The winter passed happily on both sides of the water, and the time approached for the appearance of the expected madame Granger and her companions. All was in readiness in Clifford-street; and every hour was counted by Mrs. Saville, who felt the mother busy in her bosom in proportion as fancy dwelt on the reputation of her daughter. At this moment she received a visit of ceremony from a young baronet and his uncle. These gentlemen were recently returned from the continent after an absence from England, prolonged beyond the usual period given for what is called the Grand Tour; and which time had been assiduously cultivated by sir George Lister under the guidance of his uncle, guardian, and friend.

Mrs.

Mrs. Saville received with the utmost cordiality and pleasure guests whom she had long known, and viewed with admiration the young heir, who, as a boy, had so often pleased her and Mr. Saville. His manly and dignified person, and the ease and politeness of his manners, were not lost upon her. He was at this time four- or five-and-twenty, and in the possession of an estate of five thousand pounds per annum, which a long minority had improved. His uncle was a bachelor, and had given up a rich benefice, for the purpose of educating this only hope of an ancient family, who became his sole care at the age of fourteen. The visitors soon departed, but not before they had engaged to dine in Clifford-street on the following day; and Mrs. Saville was left to the train of ideas which instantly succeeded to the baronet's last cheerful and friendly adieu.

Amelia, who was from home at this critical moment, was informed at her return of the visitors whom she had missed seeing: and the mother, elated by the visions of her fancy,

fancy, could not help communicating to her daughter a portion of her own chimerical hopes. The rank, the fortune, the personal advantages of sir George were portrayed and highly extolled; and the subject finished by Mrs. Saville's saying, "she well knew his uncle ardently wished to see him married, and she was certain that a daughter of his old and intimate friend Mr. Saville would not want his interest to recommend her to his nephew."

The youthful and ambitious Amelia from that moment thought herself secure, and prepared for a conquest worthy of her. A small family party assembled to meet the travellers, and all was ease and cheerfulness around Mrs. Saville's well ordered table.

Amelia was elated by the visible admiration which her beauty had produced in the baronet's mind. He was gay and assiduous. She thought him handsome and agreeable, and by much the best dressed man she had ever seen.

After dinner, the circle, by common agreement,

agreement, adjourned to the music parlour: here Amelia displayed a voice and an execution well calculated to fascinate sir George, who was not only an amateur, but a capital performer on the violoncello. Song succeeded song, and concerto followed concerto. Sir George was charmed with the melody of a voice which few can equal. And to the liberal praise he bestowed on this endowment of nature, was added his tribute to the skill of Amelia's music-master. In the midst of an Italian song, in which Amelia, freed from the timidity natural to her age, was pouring forth her melodious notes, the door of the apartment was suddenly opened, and Mr. Goldby with eager joy introduced Sophia and her dear madame Granger. Mrs. Saville, surprised, yielded to the sweet impulse of the moment: she rushed to meet the embrace of her child, who, sinking into her arms, mingled her tears with her mother's, and sobbing said, "Oh, I am too happy!" Madame Granger was welcomed by the surrounding friends of the family with demonstrations

strations of pleasure and gratitude. Amelia had advanced, and with some emotion had taken the hand of Sophia. She felt the pressure, and heard the sister's welcome. She turned from her mother's bosom, and, extending her arms, exclaimed, "My dear sister! my dear Amelia! let this embrace unite us for ever." The girls wept, and a pause ensued.

Sir George and his uncle, who, during this tumultuous scene of joy, had retired to the bow window as unobserved spectators, were now perceived by Mr. Goldby, who, with all the frankness and ardour of his nature, welcomed his old acquaintance, and, seizing sir George's hand, said, "Come, let me introduce you to my girl, who has been as long a stranger to her own country as yourself: and to trust to appearances," added the good old man, shaking the uncle's hand, "neither you nor myself have been losing our time." The baronet, "nothing loth," followed his conductor. Sophia was seated between her mother and sister. Her agitation had

had subsided, but her humid eyes added to the soft expression of gratified tenderness a glow of delight which gave animation to a face commonly judged too pale, for her complexion was remarkable for its delicacy. She had unconsciously taken off her riding-hat, and by this means gave freedom to a profusion of very light auburn hair, which fell in disordered ringlets on her forehead and shoulders. She rose to receive the stranger's compliment, and with a sweet smile told him, that if absence from those he loved had been, like hers, balanced by such happiness as she then experienced, she could not for an instant doubt of the sincerity of his congratulations. Amelia now proposed retiring with her sister to her dressing-room: but this motion was overruled. The travellers had slept at Spring-wood. No one was fatigued, and the conversation became easy and pleasant.

Sir George Lister admired beauty; but he was superior to its fascinating powers over the understanding. He had, without any hazard of his peace, admired the beautiful

Amelia

Amelia Saville; and, with the frankness and politeness of a well bred man, he had not concealed his approbation of such attractions as she displayed. But, before the party separated, he found that symmetry of features and brilliancy of complexion had a formidable rival, when contrasted with the modest and unobtruding charms of the unadorned Sophia; and that voice which at the instrument had "rapt his soul in elysium" was thought harsh when he listened to the soft accents of Sophia, who, with the accustomed ease which had resulted from being in rational society, conversed without restraint, and spoke with esteem of several gentlemen with whom sir George and his uncle had been on terms of intimacy.

Let it suffice, that sir George retired with the conviction that Sophia was not only a beautiful girl, but an amiable and cultivated young woman: and Amelia, not less assured of the effects of her charms, contemplated at ease, on her pillow, the day of triumph which these had secured to her; and she smiled on recollect-

recollecting the "nonsense" she had heard from the mouths of travellers who had been at Lisbon, relative to a girl whom she was certain they had never known. This delusion on the part of vanity was for a time useful, and supported Amelia in those external compliances which decorum exacted in respect to her sister, who had apparently forgotten every shadow of former offence, and who thought her, what in truth she was, a most lovely and accomplished young woman. Harmony was thus seemingly established, and Mrs. Saville's house was the abode of cheerfulness.

Madame Granger, in whose mind the banks of the Tagus had receded in the same degree as her interest in Sophia became the governing principle of her life, listened with complacency to Mrs. Saville's entreaties of passing some months with her; and Mr. Goldby gave her plainly to understand, that months would not content him.

The various engagements that the return of Sophia occasioned, now yielded to the usual

usual routine of Mrs. Saville's life; and she began to consider with curiosity sir George, who, as well as his uncle, was become a very frequent guest. The unaffected gaiety of his manners, and the strict propriety of his conduct, led to no discovery which could satisfy Mrs. Saville. She perceived only that he was become a favourite with all her family connexions, the idol of Mr. Goldby, and the shadow of madame Granger. Amelia's penetration went beyond her mother's, and her wounded vanity sought its cure in an assumed indifference. Her resentment, she conceived, had an object within its power and reach, and she began to show Sophia that she had not forgotten the disputes of the nursery. But, to her extreme surprise, she found a calm and steady rebuke, in the place of the submission which she had expected. The contests of childhood could not be again renewed, and the mild and courteous behaviour of Sophia baffled her petulance and overawed her rudeness. The workings of her little malice were answered by

reason,

reason, or disregarded; and Amelia received from the well-governed temper and superior understanding of her sister, a defeat, which, in proportion as it mortified her, increased the malignity of her heart.

Sir George soon removed all Mrs. Saville's doubts by an application for her consent and concurrence in the purposes of his heart; and I need not say that Sophia was the object it sought. His overtures were received with more stately reserve than the occasion called for; but as Mrs. Saville wisely considered that her rejection of sir George for one of her daughters could not with any probability of success secure him for the other; and as he had contrived to have a friend in every member of her husband's family, she found a difficulty in repressing his hopes, or silencing his solicitations. Her favourable opinion of his merit had been loudly proclaimed; his fortune and his rank had yet their allurements; and Mrs. Saville submitted, with a silent contempt for his preference, to

pretensions

pretensions which she could not well contradict.

Sophia, with the cold consent of her mother, was left to the decision of her heart; and this was in favour of a man not only esteemed but beloved by all who knew his worth. Amelia thought it expedient to be delighted on this occasion, and with affected congratulations endeavoured to impose on a sister who perfectly understood her, and who received them with a simple acknowledgement and unconstrained cheerfulness.

I am now come, my Eliza, to the more interesting part of my little narrative; and I am tempted to give it you in madame Granger's own words, since these will remind me of a woman who so suddenly pleased me, that I was, during the time she passed under this roof, a disciple whom Lavater would not have refused. You will perceive, however, that she had a talisman about her as powerful as a countenance beaming with sense and sweetness.

"My Sophia," said madame Granger,

"was

" was not long in discovering that the leaven still predominated in her sister's heart; but the cautious and dignified girl so conducted herself that it required some ingenuity to find a subject for dispute. Caprice was unheeded, requests were indulged, and rudeness was gently rebuked, by observing 'that they were no longer children.' Miss Amelia attempted to make a useful instrument of me: she told Mrs. Saville that Sophia loved no one but her dear madame Granger. Unfortunately Mrs. Saville had *herself* taken a fancy to madame Granger, and saw little for surprise in an attachment 'so natural,' to use her own words. Foiled in this attempt she tried another. It succeeded better.

" Mrs Saville became offended by Mr. Goldby's constantly calling Sophia '*his* girl,' and following her like her shadow, whilst poor Amelia was scarcely noticed." The frank-hearted Mr. Goldby acknowledged the charge, and alleged for his apology certain signs of contempt for him, and ill-humour to all, which miss Amelia had permitted

mitted to escape her. ‘ She is a beauty,’ added the old gentleman, ‘ who cannot bear to see a rival near the throne. Let sir George settle this business. When Sophia is married, I may fall in love with Amelia.’ The mother, unprovided with any reasonable arguments for postponing the marriage, yielded a cold consent for its being concluded in the spring; and sir George made his bow of thanks for a concession in his favour which his merit and fortune might have required to have been more graciously made. But even this term of expectation was rendered vexatious by the fertile expedients which this mischievous girl employed. She became fond of her future brother, teased him with her monkey tricks and childish playfulness; and when, weary of her folly, he endeavoured to divert it from himself, she would, with a sarcastic smile, observe that Sophia looked as jealous as a wife and as old as ‘ Lady Restless.’ The perfect disregard shown to speeches of this kind had their effect; but Mrs. Saville innocently helped her

her to another trial of Sophia's temper. Unequal to the late hours in London, she had found by experience that neither her health nor pleasures were equal to public places and crowded apartments. Amelia was never contented at home; and the fatigued Mrs. Saville found sir George an useful escort, and an assiduous protector in the tumult of a fashionable place of rendezvous.

"One evening poor sir George was summoned to his exacted duty from Sophia's side, who was slightly indisposed with a cold. His rueful looks excited my mirth, and he quitted us with undissembled vexation, well knowing the lateness of the hour when the assembly would break up. We retired to our repose, and suspended our curiosity till the breakfasting hour of the ladies: it was a late one; and our inquiries were suddenly checked by miss Amelia's formal complaint of the impertinence and officiousness of sir George Lister, whose behaviour was intolerable! Mrs. Saville's defence of the absent culprit was not less warm, and in her resentment

she hinted that she stood in need of a sir George Lister to check her in public. We were silent, and at length understood that the handsomest and by far the most elegant man in the room had applied to the master of the ceremonies to introduce him as a candidate for her hand in the dance. 'On Norris's pointing him out to me,' continued the fair narrator, 'I instantly recollected that I had seen him a few mornings since in Christie's auction room, arm in arm with the young duke of ———, who presented him to the ladies of his party. I consequently bowed in acquiescence with his request, and Norris left me in order to conduct him to me; when sir George, seeing him advance, peremptorily declared to my mother that I should not dance with a stranger, disqualified for ever being in her society under any other title; and, before I could speak, my mother said I was engaged to that abominable scare-crow, my cousin William. Colonel Osmond, for that is his name, looked surprised, and well he might! but he politely pleaded

pleaded my late condescension. I cannot retract my promise, said my mother to him, coldly quitting her seat, and drawing me into the crowd. But I attribute all this rudeness to sir George, who assumes an authority in this family to which I will not submit.' The mother in her turn related this vexatious circumstance, and reminded miss Amelia that sir George had told her in their way home that colonel Osmond was a gambler by profession, and pursued a course of profligacy which was not tolerated even in Paris, where he was excluded from every respectable society. 'What, I suppose,' said Amelia with contempt, 'from such respectable society as sir George Lister and his Joseph Andrews! Be this as it may, in London colonel Osmond is the British officer, and a gentleman who will not suffer this rudeness to pass unnoticed. I saw that he perfectly understood the impediment to his approaches, and the impertinence which produced it.' Poor Sophia turned pale, and a burst of tears prevented her fainting: the well known knock was

given, and sir George entered the room. The cause of Sophia's alarm and disorder was soon explained by me, and with the utmost seriousness he assured Sophia that there was nothing in his conduct to provoke the resentment of the noble colonel Osmond, however unfortunately his interference had operated with her sister. 'He knew me,' added he, 'and he knew that I was no stranger to his character: my discretion will content him in future, without dancing with my fair *sister*.' The event verified this observation: we heard no more of colonel Osmond."

"This stretch of brotherly authority probably produced a new whim, which however relieved the mother and the gentleman-usher from their fatiguing offices. A reconciliation took place between miss Amelia and her sentimental friend, a miss Clara Frost, whose residence was in the same street, and within half a dozen doors of Mrs. Saville's habitation. We had never seen this amiable young lady, whose feelings had been wounded by the supposed neglect of miss Saville: and the good-

goodnatured mother allowed that Clara had some reason for the accusation, having been her constant companion till she went into public. Amelia confessed that she had been to blame; but the affair was made up, and she would convince miss Frost that, though giddy, she was not ungrateful. These concessions led to the account of miss Frost's mother; 'An invalid....not too affluent.... but, as an officer's widow, saw good company at her card parties.' She was at this period confined to her bed-room with the rheumatism; and in the ardour of renewed friendship a frame of embroidery was sent to Clara's in order to work there, and amuse the poor prisoner. Sir George was left to his 'soft nonsense,' and Sophia to prepare her bridal ornaments.

"It is necessary, my dear Mrs. Palmerstone," continued madame Granger, "that I here mention an incident which will have its importance before I finish my story; in the mean time suffer it to pass as one of the examples in favour of a courteous and sweet temper.

temper. One morning an exceedingly pretty young woman, whom Sophia had more than once noticed for her modesty and ingenuity, in the milliner's shop which she occasionally used, brought to Mrs. Saville's house some articles of fashion for our choice. The day was cold and rainy, and the poor girl, fatigued, bemired, and cold, entered Sophia's dressing-room with confusion, and began to untie the bandbox, which was large enough to have sheltered her as well as the hats. 'You must rest and dry your shoes, my dear young lady,' observed the gentle Sophia, 'before I can decide on any thing: will you sit down here, or go to the housekeeper's room, who will assist you?' The young woman with a blush preferred Mrs. Rawley's good offices, and said she had been subject to severe colds since she lived in London. In due time she appeared dry and warm. We determined on our purchases; and Sophia sent the poor young and delicate creature home in a hackney coach, with a note carefully folded in her hand, which, with

with a smile of benevolence, she bade her open, and then show to her employer, as a proof that she had been detained by miss Saville. In this paper she had folded up half-a guinea, observing to me that the poor thing could not wear her clothes again without washing. There was nothing in this action to surprise me, though it did Mrs. Saville; and, with some emotion in her manner, she said, 'You are a good creature, Sophia!' Nothing more was added, and we forgot this proof of consideration for the comforts of others, in the uniform attention which Sophia gave to those around her.

"In April, the whole family removed to Mrs. Saville's house near Reading; and Mr. Goldby, who would now bear no contradiction, insisted that sir George should not be refused a nest in that house, in which in a few days he would have the claims of a son. Grateful for a munificence which had placed Sophia on an equality with sir George, in the eyes of prudent calculators, Mrs. Saville yielded with a good grace to this infringement

ment of the laws of etiquette; and, won by his merit, and flattered by an alliance so respectable, she became proud of her future son-in-law, and cordially forgave him his preference of Sophia. The lawyers and sir George were still tardy; but we were happy and gay. Miss Amelia was now a new character; and, with all the enthusiasm of her dear miss Frost, she talked in raptures of the charms of rural life, the rising sun, the radiant mildness of the moon, the enamelled meads, and the tuneful choristers of the grove. And we concluded, by the punctuality and size of her letters to her dear Clara, that she amused her friend and gratified her own fancy by sending her the poetical effusions of her pen. Sir George, who had lost his dread of offending Mrs. Saville in the enjoyment of her favour, relaxed in his submissions to her idol. He was an early riser, and walked before breakfast. Once or twice he encountered miss Amelia in these walks, who returned with him in the highest spirits, and wearied us with her sublime descriptions

of

of scenery never before enjoyed by her. Sir George slightly wrenched his ancle, *as he said*, and he rode before breakfast, taking his servant and his dog with him. At this juncture Mr. Goldby had an attack from the gout, and we became more stationary: sir George was our lecturer, and miss Amelia, forgetting the charms of nature, endeavoured to rival Mr. Goldby's 'dear nurse' in her assiduities in the sick room; which was soon, however, cheerful; for neither the crutches nor cloth-shoe could damp the satisfaction of the worthy old man. He counted the days as they passed, and engaged to dance at the wedding without either of his shackles, though he had only six days grace before him to get on his legs. At this precise period our female Machiavel judged it time for her coup d'essai, which was intended to plunge her whole family into despair. On retiring for the night, she accidentally heard sir George say that he should not want his horse, meaning to walk to a gentleman's house in our neighbourhood. To his vex-

 ation,

ation, as it will soon appear, he saw miss Amelia in his path, who, with great gaiety saluting him, asked him whether his engagement was to breakfast at Mr. Nesbit's. He replied in the negative; but with some hesitation added, 'unless he forces me to stay.' 'He will hardly do that,' answered she, 'for his groom passed me five minutes since, and told me his master was at Reading. So we will have a ramble, and return together.' Sir George had no negative ready for this proposal, and they took a circuitous round to the park, miss Amelia being the leader. On their return to the house, which was at our breakfast hour, sir George found Sophia and myself in the garden, quietly waiting the truant's return, and perfectly at our ease in respect to Amelia, one of the men servants having met the wanderers, and told me that they were walking together. Sir George was discomposed and heated by the sun; he sat down and complained of fatigue, and taking off his hat, and wiping his manly and glowing face, he added, I shall not be surprised

if

if your sister has walked up a fever this morning; she is so weary and heated, that she is gone to her room, lest her mother should be angry at her imprudence. Why did you permit her to walk so long, and so far? asked I. 'I remonstrated,' answered he gravely, 'but it was in vain; she would persist in her folly.' We entered the breakfast room; and on being told that Amelia was with her mother, quietly proceeded to our morning repast, of which Mr. Goldby partook for the first time since his convalescence. In less than an hour he was summoned: 'Mrs. Saville wanted to speak to him;' and the maid servant who delivered this message told us that miss Amelia was, she believed, asleep in her lady's bed; being quite overcome by her walk, and half dead with the headach.'

"Sir George took the newspapers and began to read, and we applied to our workbags. Some time elapsed; when the door opened, and Mr. Goldby, with an inflamed countenance, and a total forgetfulness of his crutches,

crutches, entered the room; and sinking into a great chair yielded for some moments to the violence of his passion. 'By G—d!' said he, earnestly looking at sir George, 'I believe it is all a lie! you are not a villain. It is impossible! and I will support your honour with my life, if it be necessary. Order your chaise: we must leave this infernal house for a time. Sophia,' added he, '*be easy*, I am your protector; and in the absence of this man, believe him to be an injured one. I am sure of it; for no one who deserves the name of *man* could have merited the accusation with which he stands charged by your sister: but I know her,' added he, gnashing his teeth, 'and bitterly shall she repent of this mischief!' Sir George, pale and mute with surprise and dismay, turned towards Sophia his imploring, anxious looks. She was collected and calm, and rising took her uncle's hand. 'If,' said she, 'any additional support were necessary to this trial of my fortitude and patience, beyond that which Providence has graciously supplied, I should find

find it in the sustaining proof that you are the vindicator of sir George Lister; and that my confidence in his principles, and faith in his love, defended by such an advocate, cannot be censured as the woman's weakness. But your Sophia, my dear and revered *father* and best friend, has a joy you know not yet, though you live only for her happiness! I will have the pride of heart of showing to you, and all the world if it be necessary, that sir George Lister is still worthy of the good man's favour and confidence. Suspend your departure. It is here that your presence is needful. I am going to my mother. Alas!' added she, bursting into tears, 'I cannot save her from anguish, though I can sir George from the stigma of dishonour.' She beckoned me to follow her, and instantly quitted the gentlemen.

"We repaired to Mrs. Saville's bed-room; she was still greatly agitated, and resentment appeared in her glowing cheek and disturbed air. On our entering, Amelia was on the bed and weeping. She concealed her face in the pillows,

pillows, and made no reply to our inquiries respecting her health. 'I wished,' observed the mother with an air of vexation, 'to have had an hour to myself; but my orders were not observed. That poor girl has already talked too much.'—I made a motion to retire.'Nay, stay,' continued she, 'I shall need you; and I shall know no peace till my mind is relieved.'....Amelia sobbed.....'It would not surprise me,' continued the anxious mother, 'if, what with the events of this morning, and the brutality, for such I will call it, of Mr. Goldby's behaviour, she should have a serious illness. But you must,' continued she, addressing Sophia, 'be made acquainted with circumstances distressing to me to relate before Mr. Lister's arrival. It is indispensably necessary that you should know that an alliance in his family is *now* impossible.' I looked," said madame Granger, "with terror on my child. She was still calm and unmoved; and with an unfaltering voice begged her mother to proceed..... 'Your uncle,' continued Mrs. Saville with indignation, 'might

'might have spared me this painful duty; but he prefers the vindication of sir George Lister to the honour of his own nieces; and the obligation remains with your mother to tell you that sir George is a *villain*.' Again," said madame Granger, "I cast a fearful glance at my Sophia...A serious and serene attention met my eye. 'You have,' said Mrs. Saville, 'been the dupe of professions, long since the mask of a corrupt heart. Your *sister* is the object of his pursuits. She has for some time suspected this mischief, and from regard for you has not only concealed those suspicions, but has even imposed on her own judgement. Since we have been here her observations have been painfully elucidated. An open avowal, on the part of sir George, of his change of sentiments, has insulted and shocked her. With an open declaration of her scorn, she attempted to awaken in his mind a regard to his honour, and to replace in his heart a consideration for the woman whose affections he had solicited and gained. The traitor deceived her by a semblance

semblance of contrition. He promised that he would endeavour to forget her, and implored her to keep a secret which would ruin him with his uncle, and destroy the happiness of the woman to whom he should make the sacrifice of his own. Amelia engaged to hide from every one this, as she hoped, transient perfidy; but, dreading lest reserve should betray her contempt of the future husband of her sister, she unguardedly exposed herself to a second, and a still more insolent and daring attack. This morning, under the pretence of trying how far she was able to match him as a good walker, which, as she tells me, arose from something said last night, he led her to the extremity of the park, and, confessing himself tired with the walk, invited her to sit down on the seat which commands the high road. He looked impatient and in confusion to the right and the left; and, on her inquiring for the cause, and asking whom he expected, in a rhapsody of nonsense he unfolded his wicked project. He swore he knew that she loved him; and

that

that in secret I should not disapprove of their seeking their common happiness. Speak the word, and we are in the road to it, said he, looking again with eager curiosity toward the turnpike-gate; at which she now perceived a man standing and evidently observing them. She arose with terror, and, in feigned attention to his discourse, turned in haste to the path which she knew would probably afford her some protection, as it is the one constantly taken by the villagers; and happily she met in a few minutes two women and a man who were coming to the hall. Their sturdy pace obliged her to walk beyond her nearly exhausted strength; and on entering my room, which was the first she reached, where she could unobservedly collect her spirits to meet the family at the breakfast-table, she, to her surprise, found me still in bed; and, almost fainting with terror and fatigue, yielded to my entreaties a secret too long kept, and which nothing less than the motives which governed her could excuse.

cuse. But these arose as much from her inexperience as from her affection to you; and you will bless her for a discovery that will banish *for ever* a man so base and so unworthy of you.'

"The mother paused, and with eager looks expected Sophia's reply. My heart beat with undefinable emotion when I saw Sophia with an undisturbed countenance slowly draw from her pocket-book a letter. She held it open in her hand, and, turning to her sister, said with severe though mild dignity, 'Amelia, do you ackowledge this signature for yours?' A scream instantly followed the interrogation, and, hastily springing from the bed, Amelia violently attempted to seize the letter. 'That must not be yet,' said Sophia, repelling her. 'You must patiently wait for it. If this cannot be in the presence of an injured sister, retire.' She waved her hand with an air of command; the confounded culprit stood abashed before her; and the mother surveyed her with astonishment.

ment. 'Do you wish, unhappy girl, to hear your condemnation?' said Sophia with collected firmness: 'be it so; but know that I shall extenuate nothing. That heart must be probed to the quick ere it is healed. My dear mother,' continued the softened Sophia, 'I pity you; but this is no time to dissemble. To attribute this young creature's present dispositions to your indulgence is more the command of my reason than the purpose of my heart. I have lamented your partiality more from the consequences arising from it to my sister, than from having permitted it to wear the appearance of injustice to myself. I have endeavoured to gain your esteem, and I trusted with confidence to principles too firmly established in the heart of my mother to be subdued by involuntary weakness and habitual fondness. On my return home I flattered myself with the hope that the childish jealousies of our early years were effaced from the mind of my sister. In my own I found pure affection, and the ardent

dent wish for her love and friendship; but I was disappointed, and perfectly convinced that the heart of Amelia would never beat in unison with mine. I submitted to an evil without remedy. I was neither unjust nor out of humour at a discovery so painful; I contented myself with observing a conduct towards her that gave me a claim at least to that affection which she denies me.' Mrs. Saville looked disconcerted. 'I should have hoped,' said she very haughtily, 'that this hour would not have been that of complaint against your sister, or reflection on my conduct. But pray what does that paper contain which has any reference to the subject of our present concern? and what meant your appeal to Amelia?' 'I will stay no longer,' cried the sobbing girl; 'I will not submit to this treatment!' and with violence she quitted the room. Sophia, with visible emotion, again addressed her astonished mother. 'I wanted not, madam, the evidence I now have of the disposition of my sister. You may

may be surprised when I tell you that I have for some time been prepared to meet and to disappoint her malice. About a fortnight since, I received this letter from London, and its envelope is one of Amelia's writing. It unfortunately happens that I cannot do myself justice without implicating my generosity; for her own concerns stand exposed with mine. It is necessary however that even *these* should be known to you; and, in any other situation than the peculiar one in which I now stand with her, I should have conceived it my duty, and the most unequivocal proof of affection that I could give a sister, to have placed before you the intelligence I have in my hands. It is with heartfelt sorrow that I find myself obliged to produce this information in a way so contrary to my intentions, and so unfriendly to the first wish of my soul. This was to *save*, not to *irritate!* to spare a mother, not to plant a dagger in her maternal bosom! Read that letter to my mother, my dear madame Granger. *I* cannot,'

not,' added she, covering her face and weeping. I obeyed. It was directed to miss Saville, and was as follows:

'MADAM,

'My situation in life is in all respects so remote from yours, that nothing less pressing and important than the present occasion could justify me, even to myself, for the liberty I take in addressing you.

'You may however be able to recall to memory a young person whom, about eight months since, you noticed with particular kindness, whilst taking your orders at Mrs. D---'s, in St. James's-street, where I had been fixed three years before by my parents, and where I had acquired the commendation of Mrs. D---.

'Once I had the honour of waiting upon you in Clifford-street; and on that occasion I found myself treated by you, madam, with a consideration and humanity altogether new to me. I was at that time not unworthy of your

your benevolence; for I was innocent and industrious in an employment which would have provided for my wants and the necessities of my parents.

'Let it suffice that I have been for some weeks the miserable, ruined companion of colonel Osmond; and am at present deserted by him to suffer in misery the penalty of my crime. Amongst a few articles of his wearing apparel which he left in my lodgings, I found a waistcoat trimmed with lace, and my poverty induced me to sell it. In the pockets appeared, with some other useless papers, the letter inclosed in this. I ask not your pity, madam, for I do not deserve it. Lost as I am, this confession of my shame calls no blush to my faded cheek, nor causes one additional throb of anguish to my bursting heart. God will be merciful; and my babe and myself will soon be sheltered in the grave. I live only to give it birth. Should I have been the agent of good to you, madam, by following the suggestions of my too fatally experienced mind, I shall be gratified

fied by having rendered a service to the most amiable of my sex; and did I not fear you would judge me too officious, and under the influence of a jealous as well as injured mind, I would caution you to beware of miss Saville's intimacy with *miss Clara Frost*. I have reasons for believing the young lady could not have chosen a more convenient confidant. The letter inclosed is, as you will find, directed to miss Frost's care.

'I remain with respect,

'Your humble servant,

'MARY WATSON.'"

Russel-court, No.
Covent-Garden.

Madame Granger continued her narrative: "Mrs. Saville," said she, "gasped for breath. Sophia, with tender solicitude, entreated her to postpone all further investigation of the business till she was more composed. 'No, no,' exclaimed she, 'I must know all! I am on the rack! Continue, for heaven's sake continue! It cannot be

worse

worse than what I expect.' I read as follows:

'On my life, your last letter diverted me, although it made me angry. Your wishes in favour of Sophia are dictated in such a spirit of Christian charity and humility, as appears to me to have banished all other *spirit*. But you have failed in making a convert of me. I hate the sister for whom you plead, Osmond. She has been my rival from my cradle, and, what is more, my *successful* rival; and I am determined to prevent her in those expectations which will, if completed, establish her superiority over me for life. She may at her pleasure cajole and fawn my uncle into a will that gives her his whole fortune. Why do I say she *may*? I believe she *has* done it. But I will trust to my influence with my mother for redress on that point of contention: and, should I fail, I will be consoled if she be not lady Lister. Dismiss from your mind the fancy that I once liked this precise coxcomb: I have repeatedly told you my motives for being civil

to him, and for submitting to his insolent interference with my will. My behaviour has been regulated by my designs, and these will show you what my preference of sir George Lister amounts to. As your tender conscience disapproves of my scheme, and as you have fears for my success, I have kindly deliberated on the means of saving you from the consequences of a defeat. You shall send me all your military habiliments; and, in exchange, I will present you with a scarf and band. The latter will support your pious exhortations much better than a sword, and the former shall not be disgraced by my pusillanimity. Who knows whether my delectable brother-in-law may not admit you to his table as domestic chaplain; where, for blessing the sirloin, you may have a slice of it. I am certain his lady at least would favour the pretensions of a man so forbearing, so patient of injuries, and so zealous an advocate for her being permitted to wear the name and honours of lady Lister without interruption! I wish not to despise you, Osmond, I have

in

in my bosom an advocate that pleads for you. You tell me Sophia's marriage will pave the way for your approach to my mother's house; that the people adverse to you will be removed; and that sir George has been heard to declare that he means to winter at Florence, thinking the climate here unfavourable to miss Saville. I tell you that these arguments do not satisfy me. They may or they may not be true. My project is necessary to my own gratification, and I will pursue it. Beware of leading me to think that *your personal safety*, and not the interest of your heart, has suggested your opposition to it. What! plead for a man who has insulted you! who has frustrated every hope I had of introducing you to my mother's notice and favour! who has maliciously, and, as I am taught to believe, falsely blasted your character with her! Shall this man quietly pursue his plans of happiness, and acquire the right of watching over the conduct of Amelia Saville because she has the superlative honour of being lady Lister's sister? I dis-

claim your prudence, Osmond. Do I not see, do I not hourly witness, this man's increasing ascendency over my weak mother's mind? In a few months more he will lead her at his pleasure, and Amelia will be told to bow before his wisdom and his paragon wife's prudence. But I will spare them the labour of controlling me. I will prevent the triumph of their assumed virtues. I will convince them that Amelia Saville is not made to bend either to his pride or to the cold-hearted idol of his worship. I laugh at your fears. Have I not told you a hundred times that my mother is in my hands a mere piece of wax? Leave her to my moulding. When Sophia in tragic woe returns to Lisbon with her madame Granger, the old Dragon will attend them. And what remains for me to fear, or Osmond to wish?

'It would be delightful could you, as an invisible spectator, enjoy with me the farce we are performing here I sometimes think of sending you a proof of my talents for those expedients so frequently wanted when fathers

fathers have flinty hearts and mothers have fits of obduracy. I think that with pasteboard, packthread, and shreds, I could make a puppet-show that would, for a time at least, keep love from starving. My Marionettes should more resemble nature than those of the prosing Richardson. For there you should see, without masks, the sir Charles Grandison, alias sir George Lister, in his tie-wig and point ruffles, making his morning bow to the peerless miss Byron, the reigning Sophia. There you should see uncle Selby, with the face of a lion and the heart of a tiger, scowling on every man, woman, and child, that does not worship his three idols. There you should see aunt Nell fidgeting and bustling all day long, to have all in order for the future bride. There you might see, and with me pity, my poor mother, with a brow of care, seated in a parlour exactly similar to the cedar one in Selby-house, consulting Mrs. Pratt our housekeeper, and contriving means to evade the direful necessity of unpapering the blue damask

damask bed, which has not seen the light of the sun since the day it was deposited in its state chamber. And there, lastly, you might stand a chance of seeing a face, and hearing a voice, which you say 'would create a soul under the ribs of death.' But, my dear Osmond, I desire you to be more sparing of your compliments, and less so of your docility. Let me know whether your new friend, the young Yorkshire *greenhorn*, continues to like Clara. Does he understand that she can, from her own purse, pay for a jaunt to Gretna Green? She has three thousand pounds independent of her mother, and six more must be hers at the old woman's decease. I wish the poor girl could get a husband; she is not ugly, and, when dressed for exhibition, really looks as young as myself. Do not omit your calls, nor forget the old lady's card-table. The guest you have introduced, with your stories of the battle at Bunker's-Hill, in which the gallant major Frost and your father figure as the *Bobadils* of the day, will do all we wish them;

them; and next winter may give Amelia Saville an escort in public, whose protection will please her mother and content her daughter, though the title of baronet, and the severity of a cynic, are wanting to your pretensions.

'Adieu! Sleep in peace, and trust to

'Your A. S.'

"When I had finished this curious letter," continued madame Granger, "I returned it to Sophia, and our attention was given to the disabused mother. I will omit her agonies. You will imagine what these were. To her question, 'Why Sophia had for so many days kept this intelligence a secret from her?' my young friend answered, 'That she had, in consequence of the immediate relief which she sent to the wretched young woman, heard that Osmond was in confinement for debt. Satisfied on this point,' continued Sophia, 'my next hope arose from the persuasion that my sister would not persist in a project, at once so hazardous to herself and so little calculated

to

to injure sir George Lister. He must indeed have hitherto lived to little purpose,' added she, her face glowing with a sense of his worth, 'and his friends must indeed have little understood the tenor of his life, if the silly mischief of a weak girl could have blasted his character, or disgraced a name honoured by his virtues. The information contained in these letters was of no other importance to me but as it pointed out the danger to which she had heedlessly exposed herself. As the wife of sir George Lister, it was my purpose to have made him the agent of rescuing Amelia without afflicting my mother.' 'And how is this to be effected?' asked the agitated Mrs. Saville. 'Are you to be sacrificed? is the life of a man like sir George'—She paused, and with a look of unutterable distress raised her eyes to heaven. 'You do well, my dear mother,' said Sophia in a tone of tenderness, 'to offer your petition to heaven. But be comforted. Sir George will not have an adversary to encounter. This man's necessities will lead

him to affect a semblance at least of honour, which, it may be, his vanity and principles would otherwise oppose. To this will be added his conviction that sir George knows him to be already *a married* man; for he was one of those who raised a contribution for his unhappy wife who had followed him to Paris, where she was abandoned by him to want. He mentioned this circumstance to Amelia the first night she met Osmond. She preferred the justification of colonel Osmond to the accusation of sir George Lister.'

" ' Leave me! oh leave me, my child, to this hour of thanks and gratitude to my God!' exclaimed Mrs. Saville falling on her knees, ' Oh leave me to my feelings, or I shall faint!' We retired. My young friend repaired to her dressing-room, and I went to the breakfast parlour, and sent sir George to his agitated Sophia. My tale only served like oil to raise the indignation of poor Mr. Goldby's resentment to a greater flame, and my vanity, had it stood in need of a check, would have had one; for the *irresistible*

madame Granger only made him more outrageous and stubborn in his declarations of never more permitting the offender to be in his presence. Exhausted of all my rhetoric, I was on the point of leaving him to return to poor Mrs. Saville, when Sophia and sir George entered the room arm in arm. The good old man, bursting into tears, extended his arms to receive them, and pronounced a warm benediction on them. 'It will not reach heaven, my dear uncle,' said the syren Sophia, 'unless you can forgive. Let us plead, and remind you that you are not made nor principled to cast from you a child of your beloved nephew.' His features swelled to agony. 'Thank God he has not lived to see this day!' said he. 'But do with me what you will, my child. I am happy in seeing him live again in you.' He strained the weeping girl to his bosom. 'Take her away,' continued he with assumed gaiety; and turning to sir George, 'I am made a child of by you both; but I promise to be a good one, and to do as I am bid. But by

my

my Maker I swear,' added he, 'that my future favour shall depend on her future conduct who has caused me a pang that might have been my death! I am ill, and must go to bed.' The event proved that he did not mistake his feelings. The gout returned, and three weeks delay of Sophia's marriage was occasioned by Mr. Goldby's severe illness. Sir George during this suspense went to London. He found the noble colonel at *home* in the hands of a bailiff. What were the terms of accommodation were only known by the result of sir George's interference. He was however successful in his negotiation; the *lieutenant-colonel* exchanged his commission in the guards for a colonelcy in a marching regiment destined for Gibraltar; and, to our great astonishment, he married miss Clara Frost the week before he embarked. He is since dead of wounds occasioned in a gaming dispute; and his lady is married again, having become possessed, by the death of her mother, of allurements for a subaltern officer in the same regiment in which

which her nominal husband commanded: for it appeared that the provident mother, Mrs. Frost, had not seen company at her own expense; and by her parsimony and management had left a considerable addition to her daughter's fortune, to supply the loss of an annuity which closed with her own life.

"During sir George's absence miss Amelia was for some days confined to her room with more than a pretended headach. Sophia passed the greatest part of the day with the invalid; and this unworthy girl, whether really touched by the generosity of sir George, and the kindness of her sister, or struck by the sense of that ruin from which they had saved her, professed a contrition of heart which was at least useful to herself: and the sight of her *love*-epistles, redeemed I have no doubt by satisfying Osmond's tradesmen, prepared her to meet her friends in the drawing-room. Sir George and lady Lister left Mrs. Saville's in about ten days after their nuptials, and Mr. Goldby with them. I was induced to give to Mrs. Saville this season of

happiness;

happiness; in truth it was necessary; but I then little foresaw the extent of those sacrifices of my own enjoyments which this consideration on my part would require. The young couple, with their happy uncle, returned to us from sir George's seat in Kent early in the autumn; and poor madame Granger was attacked on all sides with so many entreaties 'to give herself up to miss Amelia Saville's improvement and advantage,' that I yielded; and saw my Sophia depart with comfort for the continent in the following month of October.

"We did not quit our retirement till some weeks after; and again I experienced the truth, that to live for *others* as well as ourselves has its recompense. Poor Mrs. Saville was supported by my presence, and truly grateful for my services. The reception given her by her general acquaintance on her settling again in Clifford-street for the winter exhilarated her spirits, and pointed out the propriety of those measures which she prudently adopted. Miss Frost's stolen wedding,

ding, and the all-conquering colonel Osmond, had been a topic for the day, and had been succeeded by others as important; and Amelia Saville's share in her friend's intrigue was by the candid ascribed to her youth and inexperience, and by others to the too common mistakes of a romantic girl. I could have wished to see in Amelia the fruit which ought to have sprung from lenity, and the unceasing tenderness of her mother, who dreaded the effects that this miserable affair was calculated to produce on her daughter's health and spirits. She had some grounds for her apprehensions; for it is certain that Amelia's mind was not without its conflicts. She met the world, however, with her new pretensions to its favour with more haughtiness, though less gaiety; and gradually showed that vanity had yielded up the reins to pride. A cold supercilious air repressed the approaches of the former herd of admiring beaux; and her avowed disdain of every man who had not a title prevented any suitor for her hand during the winter that succeeded

Sophia's

Sophia's marriage; and in the full blaze of beauty and imaginary consequence did I leave her, when Mrs. Saville quitted London for the summer. I was in truth, my dear Mrs. Palmerstone, weary of my post; and with joy accepted of Mrs. Chandler's invitation to meet her at admiral G——'s, where I soon recovered from the fatigue of following an insolent beauty through a fashionable circle."

I have, my Eliza, been led by my subject to omit the circumstance of your absence from home this autumn, and to which it is owing that you are still a stranger to madame Granger; but you know that whilst you were with Mrs. Beaumont, Mrs. Chandler and her friend passed a fortnight with me. The comfort which our friend experiences in the conduct of her girls led to the foregoing narrative: and Mrs. Chandler's warm gratitude to your mother, and commendations of Eliza Palmerstone, opened the heart of madame Granger to esteem and confidence.

I have,

I have, however, still a few remaining particulars to add. These relate principally to sir George Lister's conduct. He told madame Granger that for some few days his heart was fairly divided between the two beautiful sisters; but he soon ceased to say 'How happy could I be with either!' for Amelia in her haste to see the 'other dear charmer away' communicated to him a secret. 'Her sister's delicate health, and the illness which had occasioned her detention in Lisbon, had arisen from a disappointment of the tender kind, and she had every reason to fear that her heart would never recover the wound of slighted love.' Sir George's curiosity was roused by this tale, and he learned the name of the ungrateful favourite. Unfortunately, in a few days after, this very gentleman, on the wings, not indeed of love, but of eager good will, made his way to Clifford-street from his father's house in the country. Sir George was in the drawing-room when he was announced as a visitor to madame Granger, and Sophia; and to his surprise, the

forlorn

forlorn lovesick maiden expressed a sister's frankness and cordiality of manner that could not be mistaken. A sprightly conversation followed, and, amongst other little sallies, the young gentleman reminded Sophia of her promise, sent to the mistress of his heart with a present of a tropical bird, namely, to be in England and officiate as her bride's-maid, in case she would, by her care and kindness, prevent the heedless Fanshaw from shooting, and finding his cough again in the fens. Sophia acknowledged the true statement of this appeal, and, congratulating him on his improved good looks, archly asked him whether he would persuade the young lady to wait for her bride's-maid till after Christmas. "No, no," answered he laughing; "but she will with joy receive you when in town; and then you will see me *Benedict the happy man.*" He then pleaded the hurry of the moment, and with gaiety took his leave. Sir George made those inferences which this incident suggested, and with observant eyes witnessed the various workings of cunning and envy which

poor

poor Amelia, it may be unconsciously, betrayed; whilst the frankness and unstudied graces of Sophia hourly attracted him, and finally decided his choice. Convinced by the conduct which he saw Amelia pursue in society, that general admiration was her object, and, to use sir George's own words, that she bade fair to class with those women, who, like the imaginary salamander, could live amidst flames without singeing a feather, he quietly left miss Amelia to her own amusements, and never thought of obtruding his advice on a young lady who guided her mother: till on the memorable ball night he saw that she was on the point of accepting for the dance the redoubtable colonel Osmond, whose history had been no secret in Paris, and in which stood, amongst other flagrant breaches of decorum and honour, his desertion of a young and pretty wife. Her refusal to purchase a relief from misery by the sacrifice of her virtue, had awakened more honourable sentiments in the breast of a man who had endeavoured to seduce her, and excited his generosity.

generosity. She produced legal proofs of being Osmond's wife; and implored so touchingly the aid of this gentleman to protect her from similar stratagems of her husband, that he, jointly with Mr. Lister and sir George, left her a boarder in a respectable convent; and placed in a banker's hand a sufficient sum to answer the demands of her pension and other exigencies. You already know the result of sir George's interference at the ball, my dear girl; I shall therefore proceed. During the period passed at Mrs. Saville's country-house, and which was preparatory to the union of the lovers, sir George received one or two very extraordinary notes from miss Amelia. He became uneasy, and guarded in his most indifferent actions, carefully shunning a girl whom he now thought not only indiscreet but *dangerous*. His pretence of the sprained knee was amongst these necessary cautions; for Mrs. Saville had been induced to 'wish that sir George would not let Amelia walk alone so early in the day.' Continually on the watch, he was notwithstanding

notwithstanding outwitted by the alert miss Amelia, and an interview was thus obtained which led to a conversation that at once broke through sir George's patience and prudence. His language partook of his feelings, and he told her in the most unqualified terms that he despised her: her passions rose to fury, and he calmly moved on to the house, leaving her to follow him. She did so with panting speed, and with tears implored his pity and compassion, acknowledging she had been highly culpable. This concession had its effect; sir George promised to bury the whole of what had passed in oblivion, and with a serious and manly freedom he pointed out to the penitent the reflections of his own well-principled mind. She heard him in silence, continuing to weep. When near the hall, he cautioned her to shun being seen, and to retire to her room, engaging to answer for her absence at the breakfast table. She acceded to this advice, and, in sir George's words, "left him to complete her own shame, and to stand indebted for her preservation

vation to those whom she wished to ruin. If," added he, "there is a humiliation beyond *this* for human nature to feel, I know not by what term to call it; but, did I dare, I would call it a punishment meet for a mind that harbours malice, envy, and revenge."

I shall be disappointed if this simple story do not something lessen your faith in *physiognomy*. You will, the next time chance throws you in the way of Amelia Saville, see that an angel's face may conceal the heart of a dæmon. But here we will finish our judgement relative to this unhappy young creature. A more salutary lesson is within our reach. Do we never impose on those around us? Do we never wear a semblance of virtue which is remote from our minds? Alas! my child, the wisest and the best of us would shrink from the examination of a Lavater, were his rules unerring; and yet, who of the sons of man can shun the inspection of a Being of infinite wisdom, purity, and justice? or who does not forget too often that God is in all our paths?

May his grace and favour go with you through this world, and his mercy give you acceptance at a tribunal where surrounding myriads will know you for his servant, or for the rebellious child of darkness and despair!

I remain

Your faithful

ANGELICA PALMERSTONE.

Letter XIV.

THE FASHIONABLE YOUNG LADY, OR THE UNFASHIONABLE SCRUPLE.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

It is with pleasure that I sit down to congratulate you on the recent proof you have given of your discretion. It appears that you have not now to learn that curiosity is one of those means intended by our Gracious Maker to conduct us to knowledge; but that, like all his gifts, it may not only be abused, but converted to purposes both dishonourable and vicious. Your application to your grandfather for a solution of your doubts, in regard to the curiosity that my conduct awakened, does you honour; because a censure on that conduct was implicated in it; and your reluctance

reluctance to gratify your wish of knowing my motives is strongly marked with a delicacy which you cannot too carefully cherish for a parent. His advice contains, as it ever will, not only an useful lesson for the present occasion, but a rule for the future conduct of your life. "If," answered he, "your mother do not mention miss Latimar,—if she do not enter into any explanations relative to her behaviour to that young lady, and which so much surprised you,—be persuaded that she has good and solid reasons for her silence. Repress your curiosity until she writes to you. If your next packet contain nothing relative to the subject of it, dismiss it with a full assurance that your mother cannot, without pain to herself, recall those motives which led her to treat a visitor with coldness and reserve."

You followed this counsel, and I, in return, prepare with cheerfulness to satisfy your doubts respecting the propriety of the reception I gave, in my own house, to a person whose appearance and manners seemed well calculated

calculated to call forth attention and politeness, or at least to claim that urbanity with which I receive the meanest of my guests.

About sixteen or eighteen years since I met miss Latimar at Buxton. The lady and gentleman she was with were old friends of my mother's, from whom time and circumstances had removed her. The pleasure of meeting again, though accidental, was reciprocal and sincere, and we instantly settled into one party. The parents of miss Latimar were near neigbours and intimate friends of Mr. and Mrs. Ainsworth. Her mother had for many years been confined to her apartment by habitual malady; but, as her complaint had ceased to alarm, she proposed to her friends to permit her daughter, who had just quitted a London school, to make this excursion with them. Miss Latimar was then a most beautiful girl of seventeen; she danced admirably, was extremely gay and volatile, and much more at her ease in society than young people new to the world commonly are. The reputation, justly founded,

of her large inheritance as an only child, the ancient nobility of her family, and the respectability of her parents, were not overlooked by the Buxton beaux. She received their homage with satisfaction, and as a tribute which they had no right to withhold.

As chance had placed us in each other's company without any previous acquaintance, I felt that I had as little right as inclination to obtrude my opinions on miss Latimar; and, to say the truth, I did not imagine she would esteem me either wise enough or old enough for her monitress. I forbore therefore to repress, as I was sometimes disposed to do, a vivacity which amused the young gentlemen more than it did me, and contented myself with guarding her as much as I could from their familiarities. Her friends had apparently devolved this trust on me: whether they were tired of the fatigue of following a belle of seventeen, or that they preferred a card-table to perpetual motion, I will not determine; but certain it is that Mrs. Ainsworth was constantly repeating,

"Miss

"Miss Woodley will walk with you, miss Latimar; miss Woodley will take care of you." This was a care of which I was not ambitious, as it interfered very much with my mode of passing my mornings, and I was often much perplexed for expedients to keep my volatile charge quiet for an hour or two. We had read the last new novel; we had exhausted fashions; we had criticized over and over again the "*strange faces*" and "*odd-looking*" people whom we did not know; and, to get rid of her importunity to walk out in a burning sun, and without a single object in view, I was on the point of asking her to read to me a few pages of madame Genlis's Veillées du Chateau, which I knew she had with her.

To preface a request which I perfectly knew would oppose her restless humour, I observed how well she spoke French, and that I supposed she had particularly applied herself to the attainment of it. "I have been told," added I, "that this language is spoken at Mrs. O--'s with great purity; and if all the

ladies in the house are such proficients as yourself, I do not wonder that it is so eminently distinguished for this branch of female education."

I had stated a subject which rendered madame Genlis's interposition useless. She expatiated largely on the school she had left, and concluded with a lamentable picture of the restraint which she had shared with others under the care of the lynx-eyed ladies who directed it. "I have always understood," replied I, "that these ladies are extremely solicitous for the improvement of their pupils." "Yes," interrupted miss Latimar, "they seem to think it their bounden duty to fag them from morning to night." "But," resumed I, "they are generally allowed to be as attentive to the health and comfort of their scholars as to their progress in learning." "Why yes," returned she, "they are good sort of women, there is nothing to complain of in respect to accommodations, and when one is unwell they are careful beyond all bearing: but after all, my dear Angelica,

gelica, it is not a fashionable school. I wish my father had sent me to Q--- S---, or C---- street; those are the schools for girls comme il faut! Not to speak of the connexions one forms there, I am told they have masters for the card-table. And only think of the society within these houses! Why, I am told that not a girl is suffered to appear to any one who inquires for them from a hackney-coach! no, not if it were the nearest relation" "You are singularly happy," replied I, laughing very heartily, "in the proofs which you have adduced of the superiority of these schools; but unfortunately, the evidence wants somewhat of conviction with me; for I know several girls sent from these schools with very distinguished accomplishments; but who had either never seen the teacher of the sublime art of card-playing, or had profited so little from his lessons that they were unequal to any thing beyond the nursery game of commerce. I also perfectly recollect a circumstance which entirely sets aside your hackney-coach impediments; for

it

it happened by an accident, which occurred not long since, that my mother and myself actually alighted from a most miserable one at the door of Q--- S---. We were most courteously received, and passed an hour very agreeably whilst waiting for the friend whom we expected to meet, and who had her daughter in the house." "It might be so," replied she with a nod, "but you were known: otherwise"---"But," continued I, "I met last winter two young ladies of your school at lady M---'s, who bore very honourable testimony in favour of the Mrs. O---s. They were remarked by a numerous circle as very elegant girls. Every one was charmed with their modesty and unaffected manners. I supposed them sisters, but discovered that they were only first-cousins. Perhaps you will recollect in the two miss Parnells unequivocal proofs that fashion and graceful ease may be acquired in G--- S---." "Oh, yes," cried she carelessly, "I know them, but I am amazed to hear you talk of their *unaffected manners*. We used to call miss Parnell

nell the banker's daughter, 'Piety in pattens.' The other, whose father I believe signs himself esquire from some village in Northamptonshire, will be une précieuse tout aussi ridicule."

"You have," observed I, "made a distinction which by no means identifies their persons; but," added I with seriousness, "whichever of the two it is who is remarkable for her piety (for in beauty they are equal) she will find that she possesses a treasure not only of inestimable value to her security and happiness, but one which will place her in a station to which worldly advantages cannot dare to aspire." "Ah! mon Dieu!" exclaimed the giddy miss Latimar, "how like that is to one of my governess's grave lectures! I could swear I was now standing in her odious parlour doing penance, and listening to a sermon on the sinfulness of laughing! But to be serious, my dear miss Woodley," continued she, "be persuaded that you know nothing of these miss Parnells. The one with light hair is

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an artful, designing girl, affecting all those qualities which she thinks will attract the esteem and good will of those whom it may be her interest or convenience to gain. Marianne her cousin, by apeing her, is ridiculously conceited; she is become from a country hoyden a sentimental miss. I assure you I speak from no pique, although I was not a favourite with miss Parnell; I saw through her disguises, and heinously offended her by calling Marianne, 'Rose with her chickens.'" "You appear," said I, "not to have wanted *wit* in G--- S---." "I do not answer for that," resumed she, "but I know that we wanted amusement: for what on earth can equal the life of a girl of spirit in such a house! Je m'y ennuyais à la mort. Had you seen the awkward moppets which poured in upon us after every vacation, you would I am sure, with all your gravity, have joined our party and laughed at their rosy-faced stupidity." "Probably you would have been mistaken," answered I, "for I think that two considerations would have withheld me:

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the first, causelessly offending these new and timid companions; and the second, the fear of disgrace with the governess; for I presume that this amusement was not authorised by her permission." "Non! en vérité," cried my laughing guest, "pains and penalties in abundance hung over the heads of such offenders; for the good women in G--- S--- are no respecters of persons." I looked at my watch, and said "it was time to dress." She took the hint and withdrew, leaving me to my reflections; and I assure you, my Eliza, that the first which occurred was the good fortune of the ladies in G--- S--- in being released from a pupil so little calculated for their mode of instruction and discipline.

The following day was propitious to me. Mr. Palmerstone and your father joined us, as had been agreed upon. The pleasure of our first meeting was scarely subsided when miss Latimar, who had just entered the room, exclaimed in her usual way, "Ah! mon Dieu! voilà les demoiselles Jamesons!" A coach and four passed our window and drew up to the

door of the hotel. The two young ladies, with the father, mother, and a maid-servant, entered, and miss Latimar instantly joined them with eager gratulations and welcome. At dinner she introduced her friends to us.

Folly and Vanity have so little variation, that I shall very accurately describe these young people by saying that they resembled their dear miss Latimar; but, although very pretty girls, they were not quite so handsome as their friend. She had, till their arrival, enjoyed without a competitor the admiration of the young men; and I did not in the first instance think her in danger of losing this pre-eminence in beauty: but it somehow transpired that the miss Jamesons had large and independent fortunes, and these joined to their father's wealth rendered them powerful rivals, and produced very soon a desertion which miss Latimar could not help perceiving. For a few days however I was permitted to enjoy my friends unmolested. It was the last month in which I was destined to bear the name of *Woodley*, my marriage having

having been settled for the ensuing one. Mr. and Mrs. Ainsworth were admitted into our secret, and they very honourably preserved it.

I cannot, my Eliza, refuse myself the pleasure of contemplating what your grandfather was in those halçyon days. He was suspected for the real lover; and, with a heart less devotedly fixed than mine was, he was well qualified to have made a formidable rival: for with all the graces of a person which in youth had distinguished in the most eminent point of view "the handsome Mr. Palmerstone," he enjoyed a flow of spirits which animated every one around him; whilst the urbanity of his manners and his superior understanding drew to him all that was pleasant and respectable in society.

To my great mortification I became once more miss Latimar's chief confidante and favourite. She entered my apartment after a morning's ramble with an escort of beaux and her "dear miss Jamesons." I had observed that some grievances were hourly growing

growing up to disturb the harmony which in the first instance had so inseparably united them. "You look fatigued," said I to her, on her throwing herself impatiently into the first chair she reached. "You hurry yourself out of all enjoyment by these perpetual walks." "I will be more wise for the future," answered she; "at least I will consult better my own pleasure; for these girls are ennuyeuses to a degree beyond toleration!" I smiled. "No matter," added she, "I know what that smile says, and I would pardon their being silly; but, my dear Angelica, they are spiteful, censorious creatures! and the greatest flirts in nature. They really provoke me by their folly. Would you believe it, they wear rouge, and yet have the meanness to insinuate that both you and myself have too much colour to be natural." I smiled again. "We have at least," said I, "truth on our side, and our complexions will not be the worse for an examination. Why do you listen to this sort of nonsense? I suspect that you have in your suite some

beau

beau not much disposed to favour the claims that the miss Jamesons have on your time and kindness." "Well," replied she, "be their claims what they may, I shall drop them." "You will not do well," answered I. "Nay," said she, interrupting me, "they do not deserve your good nature, I am certain; therefore say no more. You have mortally offended them by animadverting on our quitting the dance before it was finished: they have not forgotten it, I promise you!" "So it appears," said I, "that the animadversions have been remembered, and the reformation forgotten; for I have perceived, since that evening in which I took the friendly license of speaking to you on the impropriety of withdrawing from the dance, that *you* and *your friends* have most industriously done so." "Why," said miss Latimar, "this I must confess; but in return, own that you are, as the Jamesons call you, a prude of the first order. One would really suppose you a candidate soliciting votes and interest: your extraordinary civility to the shopkeepers' wives

wives and parsons' daughters must, I think, gain you universal suffrage: depend however upon my vote, for I love you with all your punctilios." "I will endeavour at least," answered I, "to deserve your love, and in return will tell you, and, if you please, the *miss Jamesons*, or any other misses, what it seems at present has escaped your observation. Amongst these shopkeepers' wives and parsons' daughters I have remarked a wonderful sagacity in seizing proper subjects for ridicule and amusement for themselves. Somehow or other these people are very frequently rational and acute; and, what is yet more astonishing, they have cultivation and good breeding; I prefer their approbation to their censure; and, to say the truth, I think I am more politic than you or your friends; for I have long since discovered that no one insults their good sense or spoils their good humour with impunity." "As you please, so let it remain," answered miss Latimar with a pert air, "we amuse ourselves. But you do well to assume in time the *matron*." I blushed.

"Yes,

"Yes, yes," continued she, "I see how it is! your *son* will not want leading-strings; which is a pity, for you would guide them admirably." She laughed, nor could I refrain. "However, Angelica, although you think me such a madcap," continued she, "I always defend you: you certainly have chosen the best; car pour le jeune homme c'est un animal d'un sangfroid inconcevable! your old lover is gay and cheerful at least; although, between ourselves, quelquefois un peu mal à propos. But you will improve him; and I recommend to your attention teaching him to be somewhat more explicit in his compliments; for I never know whether I ought to look serious for a reproof, or curtesy for a civil speech. You will not only improve your cher mari, but your *son*, I trust, who would do very well were he a little more sociable et enjoué."

This was miss Latimar at seventeen years of age. I beg you will attentively examine the features of her character; we shall see whether

whether the development of them is such as we might have expected.

Three or four years after my Buxton excursion I again saw miss Latimar: she had lost her mother; and her father at this time engaged a house in town for his winter residence. Mrs. Ainsworth in the most friendly terms recommended her old acquaintance to my good offices; and solicited my attention to his beautiful daughter with an anxiety which did honour to her own heart and principles, and interested mine to meet her benevolent designs. I never in my life felt a reluctance to be useful to youth and inexperience, or balanced the trouble, and, I might say, the little sacrifices of self-enjoyment annexed to the duty: and as often as I could, consistently with the rules I had prescribed for my own conduct, I made a point of attending and introducing miss Latimar to those public amusements, and to that circle of acquaintance I judged proper for her. I was not displeased that this care devolved entirely upon

upon me; because it appeared more effectually to answer all the purposes with which I connected usefulness and advantage to my charge. The lady who directed Mr. Latimar's domestic affairs was by no means qualified for the companion of his daughter: she was a distant relation, advanced in years, and lame; but in whose quiet temper and household wisdom the good Mr. Latimar found his comforts. He disliked a town life, and had with reluctance yielded to the wishes of his daughter; but relieved by me from the trouble of attending her in her amusements, he became not only contented but grateful.

The beauty of miss Latimar was not overlooked in London, and the particular attentions of a very amiable and respectable gentleman soon followed her arrival in town. Mr. Latimar was flattered by his overtures, and perfectly satisfied that his pretensions on the side of character were most honourably supported. As he was very intimate in our family, he declared his intentions, in the hope of discovering through my means the chance

of

of his succeeding with the lady. I had observed nothing to discourage him, and your father engaged for success. But miss Latimar unfortunately had fixed her heart on a *title*, and our friend was tenaciously attached to the name of a commoner, and one of the most respectable in the kingdom. He was rejected; and consoled himself by marrying some time after a lady, who, under the title of his wife, enjoys a happiness at once the envy and admiration of her more ambitious acquaintance.

The following year brought this family again to Pall Mall. I discovered very soon, that my gay protégée seldom claimed my former cares; her acquaintance in town became very fashionable and very extensive, and her engagements perpetual. I did not forget the good father, and often listened to his regrets for his park and his hounds. If by chance his daughter was at home, I also listened to her pathetic lamentations at seeing so little of me, and to which I sometimes drily replied, that it was scarcely possible it could be otherwise,

wise, whilst we trod *circles* so remote from each other. In reply to this, I was told of lady Betty's or lady Jane's unreasonable demands on her time; and these conversations commonly finished by the honest Yorkshireman wishing them coarsely with one whose name became as little the mouth of a gentleman as it would become my pen.

One morning I was rather surprised on receiving a visit from miss Latimar at an hour when I should have supposed her lady Bettys, her lady Janes, and herself, in their first sleep. With a familiarity which she could assume whenever it suited her, but which, with others less happy, would long since have changed to a more reserved manner of approach, she asked me to chaperon her to the French ambassador's ball. I hesitated; and at length smiling, and adverting to my appearance, frankly told her, I hardly thought myself qualified for the honour. "I declined the invitation altogether in the first instance," added I, "but the ambassador has convinced Mr. Palmerstone that I have nothing to fear;

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it is a very select party, and I have promised to show myself to my friends for an hour or two. I will however with pleasure attend you there, and doubt not but I shall find some one to whose care I can safely confide you when I shall be inclined to retire." "Oh! that will be all I wish," cried she gaily, "I shall meet many of my friends there." "That is not so certain," answered I; "the company will not be numerous. Monsieur le marquis read us the list of his expected guests last night; I wonder I did not attend to your name." "Mon Dieu!" exclaimed she with an affected laugh, "the wonder would have been if you had heard it; for I have not the felicity of being known to the marquis; and must trust to you for my introduction, and a card of invitation; which your influence will find it very easy to get me." I know not, my dear Eliza, how it was, but I never felt more powerfully a disposition to disappoint impertinence; and she was indebted for her success to my recollecting, that I should at least oblige the Ainsworths by complying with a request

which

which was neither attended with trouble nor hazard to myself, and which might be the means of showing her what was a *truly polite circle*. We parted therefore with no other cares than those which now engaged her attention; and she quitted me to consult her oracles on the important subject of her dress.

This, by the way, was in the highest style of fashion and expense; and had I possessed the vanity of being the chaperon to the most admired belle in the room, it would have been gratified. We had scarcely placed ourselves before I saw lady M— enter, accompanied by miss Parnell. I immediately directed my young companion's eyes to the bottom of the saloon, where the ladies had found seats, and observed, that I was surprised to see them; monsieur le marquis having told me they would not be in town. I endeavoured to catch their eyes, but in vain: still however keeping mine on them, I thought that miss Parnell looked thinner and paler than usual, and I added this remark to my approbation

approbation of her dress and elegant person. "Why, how would you have her look?" replied my giddy companion. "It would have been quite outré had she worn rouge to-night. Do you not consider that, as a forsaken damsel, she ought to look pale and languishing? This is her first exhibition; and to say the truth, she wants only a garland of weeping willow, to complete the picture of a love-sick maiden." She laughed at this sally of wit. "What is it you mean to say?" asked I with alarm; and recollecting that I had heard of Caroline's being on the point of changing her name, "I do not comprehend one syllable of what you are talking of." "Mon Dieu!" cried she with an air of incredulity, "est-il possible that you have never heard miss Parnell's adventure? It is now, like the last novel one reads, thrown by and forgotten; but it is a pathetic tale, and a very common one with your sentimental young ladies." "For heaven's sake," said I, "let me hear it!" "Why then, you must know," said she eagerly, "that a gentleman of the name of Brecon,

Brecon, who enjoys a very considerable estate near Mr. Parnell's country house, returned some time since from the continent. He was received by his country neighbours as by all the world, for without doubt Brecon is the handsomest and most accomplished young fellow *in the world:* miss Parnell was of my opinion, and papa and mamma had as favourable a one in respect to his fortune and connexions. He was welcomed at the Priory accordingly; and his visits there were frequent. Some common-place gallantry and assiduities, merely 'pour passer le tems,' followed; till at length Mr. Parnell thought it time to facilitate the lovers' wishes, and to talk to Brecon of settlements and the wedding-day. Poor Brecon, terrified by the danger, instead of laughing it off, very awkwardly explained himself, and left the good Mr. Parnell convinced that he was not tired of freedom. You may suppose that his retreat was resented. Poor lady M—, utterly confounded by seeing her hopes defeated, sent to the jeweller's for her antediluvian necklace

necklace and ear-rings, which, it is said were actually new setting for the bride elect; and I verily believe," added she, earnestly looking at Caroline, "that she was too late for the rescue of her dear diamonds; and that miss Parnell had got possession of them; for she is very brilliant to-night." I listened to this tale with ill-concealed indignation, and was going to condemn the speaker, when my husband led to her a gentleman as a partner for the dance; and with his assistance I reached my friends.

I should have told you, that from the time miss Parnell had quitted her school she had resided as much with lady M— as with her parents; and that, from my intimacy with this amiable woman after my marriage, I had frequent occasions of seeing and knowing miss Parnell, who was justly entitled to the affection of lady M—, and regarded by all her friends as her adopted child. Our first greetings of pleasure and kindness were succeeded by the confirmation of my fears for Caroline's health. She was evidently more

delicate

delicate and fallen away than I wished to see her; and on my inquiries she told me that she had been ill, but that she was so much recovered as to murmur at the prohibition which prevented her dancing. Her spirits were apparently such as I had always seen them, and I forgot my late apprehensions in the pleasure of her conversation. The exertions she made and the heat of the apartment soon gave a colour to her faded cheek, and I thought I never saw Caroline look so beautiful; nor was I singular in my opinion. She had drawn around us a pleasant group; and her unaffected gaiety attached the little circle to us. She particularly noticed miss Latimar's dancing, and with the utmost frankness pronounced her a lovely girl. Some one observed that she was a *silly* girl. Caroline refuted the charge, and steadily asserted that she had a good understanding, and that time would show it. The subject of this debate now approached us panting for breath, and her face glowing with exercise, and the

consciousness of having attracted every eye. Caroline instantly resigned to her the seat she occupied, settled her disordered head-dress, and with sweetness paid her some little compliment on her dancing. Miss Latimar returned these artless expressions of goodwill with lamentations on the subject of Caroline's 'bad looks:—she was shocked to see how she was shrunk.' Then followed inquiries after her dear Marianne Parnell, 'whom she would give the world to see again.' To this succeeded her remarks on the company. 'There were not three well-dressed women in the rooms, and the whole was too correct to be spirited.' Another dance was called, and miss Latimar with an air of triumph left us to our spiritless amusements. I withdrew at an early hour with lady M—, leaving my husband to take my post with two ladies, who engaged to see miss Latimar home. In our way to my tranquil pillow, lady M— engaged me to pass the following day with her; and as it was settled for a quiet one,

and

and I knew that my husband would be engaged in the city, I cheerfully promised to be at her levee.

On entering her dressing-room, I found her ladyship alone and reading. "I have lost my girl for an hour or two," said she, putting aside the book. "Her mother, anxious to know how she had borne the bustle of last night, was here at breakfast; and she has prevailed, for they are gone for an airing this delightful morning." "I am not sorry," replied I, "that I find you alone, though I have prevented you from enjoying the sun." I proceeded, and with caution mentioned the idle tale which had reached me; adding, that I much feared, lest, with such obvious misrepresentations, some cause of vexation had been experienced by miss Parnell; and which might have contributed to her illness. "Circumstances rather than any intention of mine," replied the worthy lady M—, "have hitherto kept you ignorant of the unfortunate business which has of late disturbed our tranquillity, and threatened, I may say, the

life of our dear Caroline. We have for these last eighteen months been at cross purposes, and have never met in London; otherwise your advice and friendship would have been solicited with that confidence which they merit. As matters now stand, I see clearly that they are still necessary, and I scruple not to claim them. In your half-suppressed and guarded story, I find additional motives for that interest which my heart prompts me to take in the concerns of miss Parnell; for I now find, what I never before suspected, that she stands in need of the support of the candid and good. In such a cause, the interference of Mrs. Palmerstone will never be wanting or useless. Permit me then to place before you all the events which have taken place during your late melancholy absence from town," (I had, my Eliza, lost my dear mother some months prior to this time) "and which have conducted miss Parnell to her present feeble state, and exposed her to the senseless comments of the weak, and I may add the wicked, but in which

which you will see a conduct regulated by virtues which seldom exert themselves in similar cases, I mean, by prudence and fortitude. It does not often happen that an inclination sanctioned by parents, and grounded on merit and reciprocal esteem, yields to nobler impressions.

"It is needless to tell you that I regard Caroline as my child; and that I am considered by her natural parents as a common sharer with them in this blessing. Mr. Brecon's overtures were in the first instance laid before me. Miss Parnell had known him long before he went abroad, and I have good reasons for believing that she had observed his assiduities even then with favour, as she steadily refused several unexceptionable offers of marriage.

"On his return, his purpose and hopes were declared in the most honourable manner by an application to her father, and the most unlimited conditions on his part. Mr. Parnell acted conformably to his principles; every inquiry relative to Mr. Brecon's character

was

was most honourably resolved in his favour. His tutor, a man distinguished for his integrity and piety, as much as for his learning, had, as a chosen friend, been his companion in his travels, after the age which usually sets a young man of fortune above all restraint; and this gentleman's testimony of his conduct was more than satisfactory. Mr. Parnell, contented on this essential point, referred the lover to his daughter for a final answer: this was favourable; and with parties more solicitous for happiness than useless wealth, every condition annexed to large possessions was simply and speedily settled.

"Mr. Brecon is remarkably handsome, and extremely lively and animated in conversation, for which he possesses talents rarely to be met with in this frivolous age. I have sometimes thought he was deficient in that steadiness of character, and, if I may so express myself, that sobriety of mind which I wished to find in a man destined to be the protector of Caroline Parnell: but on these occasions I recollected my retirement from the

the gay world, and those habits and opinions which so naturally take the lead in minds matured by time and experience; and I constantly remarked with satisfaction, that a look from the mild eye of Caroline never failed in a moment to check the exuberance of those spirits which alarmed me, and to silence those sallies of wit which I could not enjoy. Thus was my confidence in him restored; and I remained satisfied that, considering the license allowed to young men in the present day, and the hard necessity which parents are under to compromise with their principles, or see their daughters unsettled, we had been peculiarly fortunate.

"Caroline, inorder to reconcile her mother to the change in her situation, which was fast approaching, left me to reside in Broad-street. Mrs. Parnell could not, in the prospect of her child's happiness, lose those tender regrets inseparable from the heart of such a mother, and to these she gave a colouring, which, whilst it added to their weight, removed from her own censure the selfishness which

which she could not have tolerated in another. She pleaded constantly her daughter's delicate health, and attributed to that cause a reluctance to parting with her.

"It happened one Sunday evening, that Mr. and Mrs. Parnell left Caroline alone, in order to pay a friendly visit to a sick neighbour. She had given her orders to the servants, and concluded that she was not liable to any interruption. A visiting rap at the door consequently did not discompose her: but the hasty approach of feet on the staircase somewhat alarmed her; for she thought that the sick friend of the family must have been too ill to admit her parents, and that they were returned home. The drawing-room door opened, and Mr. Brecon entered. Miss Parnell's surprise on seeing him arose entirely from believing him at that moment in Essex, and instantly yielded to the pleasure of the unlooked-for visit. He explained to her the obstacles which had impeded his intended little journey, murmured in his usual way at the lawyers, and concluded his philippic

philippic against them, by saying he would poison them if they were not ready to go down with him in three days.

"During this interval, his hand turned mechanically the leaves of a book on the table, in which miss Parnell had been reading, and by which was a Bible still open. He looked at the book of sermons that he held, and, glancing his eye on the Bible, 'What!' cried he, laughing heartily, 'you are still *Piety in pattens*, as that madcap Latimar used to call you at school?' 'I should hope,' replied Caroline with seriousness, 'that Mr. Brecon is one of the last men who would regard this designation of the woman destined for his wife, as a term of reproach. Miss Latimar honourably, although unintentionally, distinguished me amongst my companions. The acceptation of this peculiar title in her heedless mind by no means degrades it in mine. I do not exactly view it in the same point of ridicule with herself, or those from whom she borrowed it; which, if I am not mistaken, is from the head of a farce

written by an author celebrated for wit, but who scrupled not sometimes to forget decorum: I am sorry miss Latimar has not forgotten the occasion, and the season of her life in which she was liable to the same mistake.'

"Brecon had dined gaily. He did not read Caroline's countenance with his usual penetration, and with much eagerness and vivacity he now began to ridicule her gravity, running over the arguments that with burgundy and champaign pass for unanswerable: he talked with cutting raillery of 'the believing wife converting the infidel husband;' and very eloquently descanted on the absurdity of vulgar prejudices and priestly cunning. Miss Parnell's emotions at length betrayed her. He perceived that she was shocked and in tears; and terrified by the mischief which he had so thoughtlessly produced, a passionate and fond rhapsody succeeded, which was little calculated to impose on her understanding, or to sooth her mind. He finished by saying, that such was her uncontrollable

controllable power over him, that she should find him docile, not only to Sunday readings, but in Sunday schools. He again laughed, taking her hand with gay freedom. Caroline at this moment suspected somewhat of the cause which operated on the unguarded Brecon. She arose with dignity, and quitted the room in silence. Mr. Brecon waited her return during some time, and then left the house; probably unconscious of the serious consequences of this visit.

"The next morning I was summoned to Broad-street. Miss Parnell calmly recounted to us all that I have related to you; and protested at the same time that she believed Mr. Brecon to be perfectly sober, until the moment she left the drawing-room, when either the truth struck her, or a counterfeited appearance of that state from which he might hope for an excuse for his conversation. 'I have reason,' continued she, 'to bless a discovery which has at once determined my doubts respecting Mr. Brecon's principles. I have not unfrequently *of late* observed

observed a levity in his opinions which has given me much uneasiness; I have vainly and weakly endeavoured to impose on my understanding, and to believe, that what had escaped the notice of my best friends could not contain cause of alarm or fear for me, and that my observations were rather the effects of a too apprehensive mind, than any deficiency in principle on the part of Mr. Brecon. He has happily ceased to be ambiguous, and my duty and most important interests call for the sacrifice of my inclination; nay *more*, my long cherished affection.' Tears and a sudden emotion checked her voice, but she soon recovered. 'I am determined to make this sacrifice,' continued she with collected firmness. 'I feel that my happiness must have for its security something more solid than the fluctuating opinions of a speculative mind too much influenced by human passions. My husband must have motives for his conduct which admit of no appeal but to the written word of God. The christian religion is my guide, the rock of my defence,

fence, and my support against evil. My husband must by his faith in its promises, and reverence for its precepts and ordinances, strengthen my feebleness, and confirm my confidence in those engagements which at the altar he must solemnly vow to fulfil. I have endeavoured more than once to explain my sentiments on this important point. Shall I confess that my weak reason and weaker heart have been silenced by a sophistry in which I could perceive nothing either satisfactory or beneficial to my peace?'

"Mrs. Parnell, much affected for her daughter, touched with delicacy on the importance of the question, as it related to the common happiness of all parties concerned. She spoke of the respectable and amiable parts of Mr. Brecon's character, and insinuated that a mutual explanation might satisfy Caroline, and seriously dispose Mr. Brecon to recant such opinions as had with reason alarmed the woman whom she was confident he loved tenderly. Caroline blushed, and, wiping off a tear, with quickness replied, that she

she respected Mr. Brecon's understanding, and was firmly persuaded that he was a man of integrity; 'but,' added she, 'I should despise him could he admit no better nor more pure motives for his faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, than the gratifications of his own heart, or compassion for a woman whose affections he may with truth believe he has gained.' Again poor Caroline's voice faltered. 'Why should I deny that I love Mr. Brecon,' added she, 'or that I have loved him as the only man on earth whom I believed necessary to my happiness? Had this trial of my principles been encountered with my first impressions in his favour, I should probably, like others of my sex at *seventeen*, have deplored my disappointment as irremediable. But have I not been taught by you, my best and dearest friends? has not experience in some measure confirmed your lessons of wisdom? have I not seen examples of female fortitude? have I not seen many women rise superior to a trial similar to mine; and who have, in a life exemplarily filled up

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by the duties of the wife and the mother, shown that a disappointment of the tender kind, as it is called, has no inherent power to annihilate the hopes and expectations of youth; and that the mind which will seek a refuge in religion, and maintain itself, will find in this sorrow, as in all others to which we are exposed, that *none* are designed by our Maker to overwhelm us with endless regret, except that sorrow which is attached to a deviation from rectitude? I may, and I fear I shall, sometimes murmur at that duty which now calls upon me to relinquish those hopes and expectations, and *one* to whom I have for some time committed my future prospects of happiness, and to whom my parents were on the point of cheerfully consigning the care of my safety and guidance. But I am something better, I trust, than a nominal christian; my help is with me; and I shall be more than conqueror if I do not desert myself:—nor let my dear mother forget,' continued she, gracefully taking her hand, 'the support which now encompasses

my

my weakness. We are,' said she, 'equally the dupes of our self-love in our fears as in our pretensions. You think this matter will be canvassed in the world, that I shall suffer in the public opinion, and your gentle spirit sinks at the idea. I, like you, my dear and revered guide, think the opinion of the world of importance; the virtue and good conduct of a woman cannot have too many barriers to secure it. This, I am persuaded, every prudent female will admit with myself, notwithstanding her conviction that, if the citadel is defended by principles of religion and a well-informed reason, it would be safe, although some of the feeble out-works of public opinion were removed and broken down. But I recollect,' added she smiling, 'on all occasions when the restraints of custom and the dread of this 'world's laugh' oppose themselves to my secret judgement, that even the mistress of the world, all-powerful Rome, was saved by the babbling of *geese*; and that the restraints even of prejudice and narrow-mindedness, if they increase

crease the impediments to do evil, are useful and respectable. But no strictures on female conduct shall supersede with me the commands of a superior law; and influenced as my conduct is in the present instance, I am prepared to meet the censure of the world. The story will have its course without doubt in our narrow circle. It will be defended and blamed, as the caprice of the moment suggests, by the majority of those who will listen to it without any further interest than that of hearing what they had not heard before. The candid will suspend their censures, and the *good* will remember those friends who protect me. Mr. Brecon will, I trust, easily forget a woman who is able to sacrifice him to what he will call a mistaken and intolerant zeal, and he will be congratulated by his gay friends on escaping from a yoke which I believe they reprobate nearly as much as revealed religion. We will, if you please, leave town for a little time. Perhaps,' added she, weeping anew, 'my spirits may demand some respite from the hurry

hurry of London, and will be better prepared by a short retirement for my return to my usual modes of life.'

"We went to my house in Berkshire some days after this conversation," continued lady M—. "Mr. Brecon has not been so easily consoled as Caroline predicted. He followed us; but urged a hopeless cause. He now addresses his petitions and complaints to me, having in vain tried the interference of his friends and the interest of Mr. Parnell, who really loves him. Here is his last letter," added she, putting it into my hand; "read it; you will find in it sentiments worthy of the object he solicits, and honourable to himself. The date is not ten days past. I entreat of you, my dear Mrs. Palmerstone, to avail yourself of this confidence whenever you may judge it expedient. Mr. Brecon makes no secret of his wishes to renew his engagements with miss Parnell; and he would with indignation resent a doubt of his sincerity: but this doubt with many originates in concealed malice, and must be counteracted.

Your

Your character and influence are happily more than sufficient to support such a cause as that in which I now engage you. Caroline would disdain the poor and miserable attack of malignity; she would reject every mode of silencing it, but that of time and the evidence of truth. But you and I know, my dear Mrs. Palmerstone, that female delicacy and female honour ill sustain this slow progress; they demand prompt and vigorous assistance, in order to repel malice and confute detraction."

Miss Parnell and her mother now entered the room, and we passed the remainder of the day with mutual satisfaction and cheerfulness.

A short time after my interview with lady M—, miss Latimar surprised me with another of her unceremonious visits. She entered my dressing-room at a very early hour, and, after a hasty salutation, abruptly and with eagerness asked me whether I had heard lady M— mention Mr. Brecon's intention of going to Barbadoes. I answered in the negative.

tive. "I thought as much," cried she exultingly. "I *knew* it could not be true; but there are people who will give credit to any thing, no matter how improbable. It is very likely, indeed, that Brecon should quit the pleasures of London for that horrid climate, where if he live he will become as black and as savage as his filthy negroes." "Well," replied I laughing, "let us leave him to his fate, in case he is so careless of his complexion; for my not having heard of his intention is no evidence for or against the news you have picked up. But, as you justly observe, public report is entitled to little faith. I am afraid," continued I more seriously "that both you and myself have been too credulous in regard to the nature of that gentleman's connexions in Mr. Parnell's family. Miss Parnell was by no means *the dupe* of her own vanity, as you were informed: on the contrary, she has been actuated by the most noble principles, to reject an alliance in which not only her own inclinations but Mr. Brecon's happiness are the sacrifices.

Assured

Assured as I am of this truth, I think with regret of having for an instant listened to your improbable story, and I doubt not but that you will be sorry for having repeated it." "I had," answered she with an air of pique, "that silly business from a source too ostensible to admit of any doubts relative to the truth of the account. I know from the most undeniable authority, that Oliver Brecon never had a thought of marrying miss Parnell, nor the wish of misleading her or her friends into such an opinion." "That is very extraordinary," resumed I; "for such an authority as you appear to rest upon certainly contradicts Mr. Brecon's own declaration."——I paused——she was silent.—— "Moreover," continued I, "I have read lately a letter written by himself, containing reiterated proposals for the renewal of an engagement, the interruption of which he deplores as the heaviest disappointment of his life." "Yes, yes," exclaimed she, "I understand how all this has happened: lady M— is an excellent auxiliary on such occasions!"

sions!" "You surely," demanded I with some quickness, "do not mean to imply that lady M— is capable of imposition or forgery! and yet she must have been accessary to both, before you can set aside the evidence I have given you. Nor do you, I believe, imagine that Mr. Brecon would contentedly submit to such measures, or deny his own handwriting. The truth therefore is palpable; and if you wish for further confirmation, you shall not only see this letter, but be convinced that Mr. Brecon openly avows his attachment to miss Parnell, and that he has employed, not ten days since, the interest of his friends to regain her favour and esteem, and effect his desire of an union. Be then just to yourself, my dear miss Latimar," added I softening, "be candid, and allow that you have been misled by a misrepresentation of this amiable young woman's conduct. Your persisting in an obstinate adherence to the tale you have heard will only injure yourself. You have long known Caroline Parnell, your youthful days were passed in the same house.

Every

Every one who knows miss Parnell will reject this story, and you will most honourably exhibit your own character by treating it with the contempt which it deserves. You are young and beautiful like her, and equally exposed to the shafts of envy. The cause of Caroline Parnell is a common cause, which every virtuous and prudent young woman ought actively to defend. Falsehood and malignity would soon retreat, did they find opponents in every honest and candid hearer of their fabricated malice. It is our supineness and indolence which give them celerity, and the power of injuring the innocent." "I thank you, madam, for your *instructions*," replied miss Latimar with ironical humility. "I am sorry that I feel on this occasion so little disposition to profit from them. Facts with me are stubborn things. I beg leave to resign miss Parnell and her concerns into your and lady M—'s hands. You are much better qualified to combat with general belief than I presume to be."

I was provoked, my Eliza, and with no little

little asperity reminded her of a proof which she had so apparently overlooked. "You will do well," said I, "in your future animadversions and comments on this affair, to recollect that, whether it arises from a natural love of justice, or from that shrewdness and cunning which depravity rarely wants, the world has a wonderful sagacity in discovering the common incitements to malevolence and slander. Take care lest it stumble on the truth, in ascribing motives for your disbelief of circumstances to the honour of this excellent young woman, that will be more offensive to your vanity than the triumph of her *fair fame.*" She rose indignantly from her seat. "I will at least," said she, furiously ringing, "spare that *vanity* further insult at present." "You will do *well*," said I calmly, "and still *better* if you can as easily and effectually secure it from the many it will have to encounter." She retired haughtily and rudely.

I was diverted some days after by the account which she diligently circulated of our quarrel.

quarrel. I had, according to this accurate chronicle, cruelly insulted her *feelings*, by upbraiding her as the cause of Mr. Brecon's desertion of miss Parnell, a young lady whom she so particularly esteemed and admired. I had even gone so far as to insinuate, that she had favoured his addresses. I smiled, and miss Latimar's injuries were forgotten.

You may perhaps imagine that this giddy girl had some object in view by this conduct, not very remote from the accusations that she produced against me. You are mistaken. Miss Latimar was a coquette, and invulnerable but on the side of vanity. She would have heard of the death of a lover with more composure than of the desertion of an admirer. Mr. Brecon had never inlisted under her banners; and the most she could promise herself was, to see him occasionally in her train; for his society was not hers. The sole motive of her conduct must be simply reduced to the desire of lessening that influence in another, which she coveted to enjoy without a rival; and Caroline Parnell shared

her enmity with every other young and beautiful woman who stood in her way.

From this period I lost sight of miss Latimar. The very recollection of her was lost in scenes in which she could have no interest. At length I accidentally learned that she had associated with ladies established in the public opinion by the pains which they had taken to place themselves above its censures; and an idle story was produced to convince me that miss Latimar had not quite reached their impunity: for it was said, that at Bath she had with apparent complacence received the assiduous and marked attentions of an Italian nobleman; that he had followed her to town, and was very fortunately recognised by my lord B—, whose valet he had been at Naples. I will not be responsible for the truth of this story; but I know that Mr. Latimar gave up his house in London from that time, and kept his fair daughter immured at his seat in Yorkshire, with some severity on his part, and much reluctance and obstinate contention on hers.

She

She was at the time of her forced retirement three- or four-and-twenty; and I leave it to you to calculate the progress she had made in that career, which at seventeen so miserably invited her. I leave you to trace the road which has vanity for its guide, and folly for its end.

I was prepared for her late visit by a letter from Mrs. Ainsworth, in whose age and infirmities lie buried not only her good sense and experience, but the remembrance of those acts of kindness and friendship which miss Latimar has received from her for the greatest part of her life. She informed me that miss Latimar, weary of her confinement, and impatient of control, had insisted on visiting London; that her father, tired of opposition, and weakened by age and severe fits of the gout, submitted; but firmly withheld the means of gratifying her love of expense and show; alleging that she had spent a fortune when permitted to do as she pleased with his purse. It appears that he was firm. She is therefore in lodgings with

two servants; and in this situation she probably forgot that eight years had made any change in the circle of her former brilliant amusements. But she finds the place she then occupied filled up; her former gay friends no longer recollect her face; and some amongst them are ashamed to show their own. In this awkward predicament miss Latimar thought of me, and with some reason judged that I had it in my power to be useful to her. But miss Latimar has no longer the plea of youth and inexperience to urge with me; and I am no Quixote in the work of reformation. I am well assured that it would be as chimerical to combat the established empire of folly and vanity in the heart of a woman upwards of thirty, as to encounter windmills under the imaginary forms of giants and magicians. For all other domineering passions wisdom may hope to find an antidote, and prudence and address may seize the moment in which to render it efficacious: but vanity is a tyrant which never sleeps; it feeds on all the nobler faculties of the

the mind, subdues reason, and scorns instruction. Insensible to the contempt it excites, its restless search is admiration, and with greedy haste it snatches it from the meanest adulator, or the most insidious betrayer. Miss Latimar must now sink into that character which she has prepared for herself. She has received the tribute which fools only pay to youth and beauty; she has no claim to that which wisdom cheerfully gives to merit. As the votary of vanity she has had her reign: the remainder of her existence is a blank in society; and will produce no better fruits to herself than repinings and discontent, to say nothing of those evils to which inveterate folly may yet betray her.

It did not suit my temper, my principles, or my convenience, to become useful to this lady. My coldness towards her when here has explained my intentions; and we shall see no more of her.

I think you will have reason to complain of me if I omit satisfying you with the sequel of miss Parnell's story. I will therefore finish

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my narrative, by relating those events which induced her finally to take the name of Brecon.

Miss Latimar's intelligence, respecting this gentleman's visiting a large estate left him by an uncle in Barbadoes, was well founded. Disappointed in all respects in his hopes to regain his former footing in Mr. Parnell's family, he quitted England; but her predictions as to his appearance at his return were somewhat less exactly verified. It is true, he returned a *changed man*, and his complexion was not improved; but although it was not quite the colour of his "filthy negroes," it bore the hue of *melancholy*, and alarmed his friends. He retired to his seat in Essex, and for some time appeared to have forgotten the world. Doctor S—, his constant companion and dearest friend, at length succeeded in dispelling one subject of regret from his mind, and he insensibly mixed in society. The steady and manly indifference with which he met the pointed ridicule of his former gay associates, the assiduity with which

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he engaged in pursuits worthy of him and suitable to his condition in life, convinced every one that Mr. Brecon was a *changed man*. At this time he became a frequent visitor at your grandfather's, and gained with us an esteem that he has maintained to this hour. In about a year after his return from Barbadoes I received the following letter from lady M—, to announce to me an event which all miss Parnell's friends were prepared to expect, and which all heard of with satisfaction.

"You will rejoice with us," wrote lady M—, "in the happiness of this auspicious day. Your favourites are united. It is more than probable that the delay of their happiness will be the basis of its security; for it now rests on a sincere return from error on the one part, and the most entire confidence and esteem on the other. Doctor S—, who joined their hands, has just left me, weeping with joy, and saying, like the good Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Think,' said he, 'think, my dear

dear lady M—, to what a height my share of this day's comfort amounts! But you cannot duly estimate it without knowing what was my sorrow, on seeing the object of my best hopes, and the child of my affection, desert that cause for which I have lived, and for which I would meet death.'

"'Oliver Brecon was left to my care at seven years of age by his father, who kindly thought my integrity equal to the duty, and my friendship equal to the burthen. He was of age before he travelled; and with honest pleasure I found that he preferred his tutor and his father *in love* to a younger companion. I had in the early part of my life made connexions on the continent, which now became useful to Mr. Brecon; and with pleasure I introduced this *second* proof that I had not lived in vain. I exulted in the success of my labours, and saw with pride a conduct in my pupil that reflected honour on my gray head. He treated the flimsy sophistry which he met with in almost every literary society that he frequented,

quented, with manly argument and proud defiance, and quitted it with the reputation of a man who was well able to defend the cause he had adopted, and who was worthy of it. I enjoyed my triumph too soon, and I doubt too proudly. His unsuspecting nature, the conviviality of his temper, that consciousness of abilities which self-love even on weaker grounds whispers to the human heart, all tended to mislead him in London. His large fortune and independent condition soon allured around him associates, not the less qualified for his seduction by being removed from suspicion in a mind that had no clue in itself to lead it to conceive a sinister design in that of another. But these very honourable friends found that they had more to do than they looked for. Brecon from a boy hated trivial pursuits. In exercise he was manly, and even daring; but a love of study was his predominant passion. Gaming was his aversion, and the pleasures of the table finished for him when conversation and wit were lost in revelry. His new friends saw

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that they had to corrupt his taste as well as to pervert his morals. They wanted not penetration, and soon discovered that it was necessary to break down the strong fences which defended both the one and the other; but which had not kept out the vanity of a young man sensible of those acquirements which constituted with him the only superiority of which he was ambitious. Religion became their topic of debate, and ridicule their keenest argument. Oliver entered the lists with ardour. He repelled their attacks with success; but his honest heart perceived not their subtlety. A loud laugh could now disconcert him, and he began to waver in that faith which he had believed could silence wilful obstinacy. Ardently did he return again and again to the charge. He struggled for victory, when retreat would have been not only honourable but glorious; for his defeat was the triumph, not of reason, but of concerted cunning and dissimulation. They listened to betray, they answered to entrap; and the inexperienced Oliver became a con-

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vert to men, whom a year before he would not have deigned to meet in the fair and open investigation of any subject worthy of his thoughts. That miss Parnell in the first moments of self-recollection had not an influence, it is far from my intention to assert; but I will be answerable for the sincerity with which he has returned to those principles which he inconsiderately abandoned. Their infinite importance to the happiness of man has been duly weighed by a mind seriously alarmed by the hazard of relinquishing them; and Mr. Brecon has fallen, to rise with redoubled firmness; for he knows at present the strength that is needful for human weakness.' "

I cannot, my dear Eliza, finish this letter without some observations of my own. You have been instructed in your religious faith by parents who have honestly made that religion the rule of their conduct; and with every argument resulting from their own belief and experience they have endeavoured to convince you that there is no safety in this world for those who reject the word of God

God. You well know likewise that I am no bigot: all who profess the same faith with myself, and all who profess to follow the same divine leader, are Christians with me, however we may dissent on those speculative points, which, as having little to do with our obedience to the precepts and commands of our master, are and must be subjects of less importance to me, and to all those who with limited knowledge and humility of heart prefer doing the will of our divine teacher, to searching into the mysteries of that faith which we acknowledge as sufficient to save. But you are now, my Eliza, entering a world that will hourly call upon you for pity and toleration. You will meet men, who, under the name of Deists, will surprise you by their rejection of that very gospel from which has been drawn the pure morality they profess, and which I am willing to believe many of them practise. These are men whose reasoning faculties are acute, and whose reading has given them more ingenuity and subtlety than love of truth and simplicity;

simplicity; not that they hate the light, but that pride teaches them to think that they have eyes to search into the secrets even of Omnipotence. We will not presume, my child, to judge such men as these: but we may lament their desertion of a faith, which would not disgrace their boasted reason, and which even they must allow promises more than scepticism. We will however, my Eliza, freely show our contempt and scorn of those who adopt infidelity as the fashion of the day; and who, without one appropriate idea of the subject, or more instruction than they brought with them from the nursery, set up for free-thinkers; and consider their senseless attacks on revealed religion as proofs of their wit, and tests of their understanding; and, in their rude and officious zeal to break down the barriers which secure their neighbours, fancy that their pilfered language and arguments must convince others, though unintelligible to themselves. I have met with even boys, my dear child, who

who have pertly and insolently obtruded their doubts amongst a circle of women, and in the presence of their mothers and sisters. I have listened to some of these superior geniuses, who with the utmost self-complacency have congratulated themselves on having discarded points of faith, which the wisest and most enlightened of our race have believed and defended with glory. You will, as well as your mother, be in danger of forgetting Christian charity with offenders of this sort, and, like her, you will wish to remind these *young gentlemen* to remove in the first place a suspicion by which a simple believer may very well oppose their endeavours to make proselytes. Let them take care not to discover to the world, that their view in rejecting the gospel is to remove all those checks which vice needs, and to which they give the reins. Our religion is in this respect exactly conformable to our reason. We know that sin is misery; and when a libertine tells us that the gospel is a fable,

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invented by the craft of man, we must be idiots not to perceive that he has motives for disbelief, which it is for our security and happiness even in this life to shun as we would a desolating pestilence. "To search the Scriptures" is recommended by an apostle who well knew that they would stand every inquiry which resulted from a love of truth and a humble mind. But be not ashamed, my Eliza, of following your mother's example. Search them for the salutary purposes for which they were given, namely, to purify the heart, and to conduct you to the source from whence they came. And remember that there are multitudes of *both sexes* "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," merely because they are "high-minded," and lovers of vain *argument* more than "lovers of God."

You will expect me to say a few words respecting the present situation of Mr. and Mrs. Brecon. They have resided since their marriage with lady M— in Devonshire, her health

health being infirm. But I am told by Mrs. Parnell, who is just returned from thence, that she expects them in town this winter; and she has prepared me for the embonpoint of her daughter, and to receive her nursling, a boy who ran alone at eleven months.

I am

Your affectionate mother,

ANGELICA PALMERSTONE.

THE END.

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